

THESIS

FRAMING AN NFL LEGEND: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

FRAMING AND STRUCTURAL PLURALISM IN REGIONAL VS. NATIONAL  
NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF BRETT FAVRE'S RETIREMENT(S)

Submitted by

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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY CATHERINE M. LUNDY ENTITLED FRAMING AN NFL LEGEND: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: FRAMING AND STRUCTURAL PLURALISM IN REGIONAL VS. NATIONAL NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF BRETT FAVRE'S RETIREMENT(S) BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE.

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

FRAMING AN NFL LEGEND: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

FRAMING AND STRUCTURAL PLURALISM IN REGIONAL VS. NATIONAL

NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF BRETT FAVRE'S RETIREMENT(S)

When legendary quarterback Brett Favre retired from the Green Bay Packers, not even he knew what the coming year had in store. Favre's subsequent un-retirement, additional season with the New York Jets, and re-retirement attracted immense media attention unparalleled by another athlete. Framing theory was used to compare regional (*Green Bay Press Gazette*) and national (*New York Times* and *USA Today*) newspaper coverage during the tumultuous yearlong period. Qualitative content analysis revealed differences and similarities between the publications' framing of the storyline. Structural pluralism theory proposed further differences between the two classes of publication. This phenomenon suggests smaller, less varied communities' media report less conflict than news reports covering larger, more complex areas. Additionally, the study provided evidence of a ritualistic, religious treatment of sports in modern society and its print media.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“Packers to Favre: ‘Take Your Time, Asshole’ ” screamed a headline from *The Onion* (2006), which features satirical news stories on both real and imagined topics. The article parodied Brett Favre’s annual ritual of contemplation and procrastination in deciding whether or not to return to his post as beloved quarterback of the National Football League’s (NFL) Green Bay Packers, a position he had held for fourteen seasons. Favre had considered retirement for years, but in the end, always came back to the game he loved. A few weeks after *The Onion* article surfaced, Favre announced his return. But after two more seasons, the end was in sight for one of the NFL’s most celebrated athletes.

Days before his official announcement, the Packers’ website accidentally leaked a webpage that contained only a headline, stating that Favre had retired. Though team officials were quick to assure fans that the site was only a preemptive template for when and if Favre retired, the slip-up was a foreboding signal of what was ahead for Packer fans (Wilde, 2008). On March 4, 2008, Favre tearfully announced his retirement from the NFL after seventeen years, sixteen of which were played with the Green Bay Packers. A playoff loss to the New York Giants had knocked the Packers out of Super Bowl contention a month and a half earlier, and Favre cited disappointment and mental fatigue as deciding factors in his decision

(Battista, 2008a). Word of the announcement saturated the news, from major television sports networks to online news media outlets and everything in between.

The extensive coverage came as no surprise, as the city of Green Bay and dedicated Packers fans nationwide had literally fallen in love with Favre's boyish charm and almost superhuman ability to throw a football. I was one of these fans. In addition to the obvious connection that Favre coverage had with the study of communications, my interest in this topic had more personal relevance. Growing up in Wisconsin as a lifelong Packer fan, I had firsthand knowledge of the effect Favre had—not just on the Packers team, but on an entire group of Packer faithful who had come to depend on him for an important part of their identity and culture. Even in the direst of football circumstances, Favre's presence on the field meant the Packers could always stage a comeback. This hope radiated far beyond the gridiron, however, and brought every day inspiration to the fans with whom Favre had a familial connection.

Because Packers' football was part of my culture from a very young age, there is a part of me that is inescapably tied to whatever results I convey from the reading and analysis of news reports about Favre. Therefore, this study is best viewed as a product of my own impressions of the media coverage of Favre. My personal feelings were especially difficult to disentangle from the study during the time when Favre and the Packers were in such disagreement about his future with the team. However, my knowledge of the subject and my acute interest in the storyline provides a sense of perspective and depth that a non-Packer fan, with no

background knowledge or emotional investment in the situation could not have reached in his or her analysis.

The Favre-led Packers had amassed a cult-like following in recent years (Cameron, 1997). The loyalty between sports teams, sports heroes, and fans was not overlooked by academics either. In fact, in recent decades, numerous scholars have studied the religious following that many sports, including football, have gained. Chidester (2000) likens sport to a church: "It is a religious institution that maintains the continuity, uniformity, sacred space, and sacred time of American life" (p. 221). To Rosengren (2004), fans comprise a faithful, dedicated community of believers and are reminded that certain athletes will "inspire and edify us" (p. 14). He also noted that fans are drawn to sport by their desire for community, more so than the experience of winning or losing. Novak (1994) points out that sports arise from a human "impulse of freedom, respect for ritual limits, a zest for symbolic meaning, and a longing for perfection" (p. 19).

Dayan and Katz's (1992) findings also highlight this ritualistic view of sports and other historic occurrences. While their research of celebrated media events focuses mainly on television, it likely applies to other media forms as well, including newspapers. These notable happenings can evoke anxiety and captivate audiences in a ceremonial fashion: "If we accept the invitation to assume a ritual role, we take leave of everyday routine together with our heroes" (p. 119). Audience members are "transformed into expectant witnesses of a historic moment" (p. 120). Further, after the event is over, the normalcy of everyday life recommences.

As it related to Favre, the study was interested in the following questions: Were there differences in how the story was framed in different newspapers? Did national newspapers cover the story differently than the local Green Bay publication? Was a ritualistic, religious tone prevalent in regional or national coverage of the story? What other differences, if any, were observed between the regional and national publications?

While other cities have had their love affairs with sports stars (think Denver and John Elway or Chicago and Michael Jordan), Favre's retirement was different. This may be due in part to the unique connection that the city of Green Bay (pop. ~100,000) has with its football team. The Packers organization is the only one of its kind: a non-profit, major league professional sports organization owned by the public does not exist anywhere else in America. This business anomaly comes complete with shareholders who have never received dividends, and is governed by 45 directors and a 7-member *unpaid* executive committee (Turco & Lim, 1998).

This David vs. Goliath football fairytale has endeared fans since the Packers' formation in 1919. Perhaps nothing underscores this unparalleled relationship between city and sports team more than the wait list for Packers' season tickets, which is nearly 81,000 people long. Turnover produces roughly 50 tickets per year (Reilly, 2007; Schoettle, 2009). The Packers have sold-out every game dating back to the 1960's. As Packers spokesperson Aaron Popke put it, "it's a point of pride among a lot of people to be on that list. It's part of our culture" (Schoettle, 2009).

Another part of the storied Packers culture inescapably includes the Green Bay media. For as much coverage as Favre generated throughout his tenure with



the Packers, it is interesting to note the connection between the Packers and the *Green Bay Press Gazette* (GBPG), the Green Bay area's own newspaper. The original *Press Gazette* office building hosted the meeting that led to the Packers' formation, and the newspaper and its publishing company helped save the Packers from financial ruin on multiple occasions in the organization's early days (Green Bay Press Gazette Homepage, 2007). It seems fitting that the *Press Gazette* covered the Packers and later Favre, with such intensity. Small newspapers like the *Press Gazette* have historically tended to avoid conflict in reports, as compared to larger metropolitan publications (Olien, Donohue, & Tichenor, 1968) though conflict was unavoidably linked to Favre's contentious departure from the Packers after he both retired and un-retired within a matter of months. Despite his wavering, Favre was a beloved figure, both for Green Bay and for football fans worldwide.

It is difficult to say which side of Favre was more appealing to fans, as he took on the roles of outstanding athlete and upstanding citizen simultaneously. 'Favre the athlete' retired in 2008 and at the time had numerous prestigious records to his name, including those for most touchdown passes, passing yards, and victories by a quarterback. He had won a Super Bowl title and had also started a stunning 275 consecutive games, an almost unheard of feat, especially for a 38-year-old veteran quarterback. (As of the end of the 2009-2010 season, Favre continues to break records and build on this streak, having yet to miss an NFL start). Players and coaches were often stunned by Favre's uncanny ability to turn a seemingly dead play into a pass completion—or a touchdown. Though erratic early in his career, as shown by his record for most interceptions thrown, his ability to orchestrate fourth

quarter, come-from-behind victories became one of his many trademark maneuvers (Battista, 2008a).

Favre also attracted ample attention off the field, as interest in his everyday life sometimes overshadowed his athletic achievements. Favre's soft-spoken likeability was often attributed to his country upbringing in Kiln, Mississippi, which resonated with the tight-knit Green Bay community. The two communities shared small-town values—and later, an undying respect for Favre's desire to better both areas through endless charitable work (Cameron, 1997). Perhaps Favre's personal struggles often better exemplified McGuriman's (2006) football/life analogy: "The game of football represents the struggle to persist in the face of hardship, suffering, injustice, physical strain, unequal odds, and the uncertainty dealt by fate" (p. 40).

Favre had been public about his rocky beginnings in the NFL. He overslept his first team photo shoot with the Atlanta Falcons because he had been partying the previous night. He had also been open about his Vicodin addiction over a decade earlier (Cameron, 1997). Additionally, the media documented his family struggles as he endured the untimely loss of his father and numerous other relatives during his tenure with the Packers (Shipnuck, 2007). His wife's battle with breast cancer was also publicized, and after her remission, she published a telling book about the ordeal that also offered insight on her famous husband and their personal life (Favre & Hunt, 2008). Favre's ability to overcome the most trying of personal situations only enhanced his likeability and charm.

Clearly, Favre's retirement was no everyday occurrence. Countless sportswriters and commentators lamented the loss of one of the last great football

players, and Favre was bombarded with media attention from the moment the announcement was made. As with any great athlete, there was chatter about whether Favre's decision was the right one (Chappell, 2001). In fact, academic literature has focused on the difficulties faced by many athletes in the period after retirement (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). The validation of these struggles hinges on the realization of "sport as an interactive force within society" rather than simply a recreation and entertainment-based entity (Hill & Lowe, 1974, p. 5).

Ultimately, Favre was not ready to face the life of a retired athlete. Just four months after his emotional retirement press conference, he announced his un-retirement and asked to be reinstated as a Green Bay Packer and reclaim his starting job. While the prayers of the Packer faithful seemed to be answered, the second coming was short-lived. During a period of days when as much as a text message from Favre to the Mississippi-based *Sun Herald* newspaper was endlessly dissected, fans anxiously waited for news of his future with the Packers (Mortensen, 2008). With mixed emotions, the Packers announced they had moved on. Aaron Rodgers would anchor the team at the quarterback position.

Much to the overwhelming disappointment of many diehard supporters, the management had spoken: Favre was no longer welcome as a Green Bay Packer. He was, however, welcomed with open arms by a different organization via a trade. Days after he and the Packers parted ways, the newly christened "Broadway Brett" became a New York Jet (Myers, 2008). Brett and the Jets started strong, jumping to an 8-3 record as Favre brought the same magic to New York that he had showcased in Green Bay throughout his career. However, Favre and the Jets faltered in the last

games of the season, finishing a disappointing 1-4 and missing the playoffs (Begley, 2008). Not many were surprised by Favre's second retirement announcement on February 11, 2009. Favre was adamant that this time, he was hanging up his helmet for good (Boland, 2009).

However, he just could not stay away from the game. During the off-season, Favre had surgery on his injured throwing arm, and vacillated back and forth about returning to the NFL—this time as a Minnesota Viking. Though Favre initially said no, citing lack of arm strength, he eventually gave in to repeated inquiries from the Vikings organization, signing a two-year contract and donning the purple uniform he once despised (Battista & Borzi, 2009). While an interesting (and to many Packer fans, disappointing) twist in the story, newspaper articles from this period of Favre's career will not be included in the analysis. Favre and the Vikings had a successful year, and their 12-4 regular season record included two victories over their bitter division rivals, the Green Bay Packers. Unfortunately for Favre, history continued to repeat itself— Favre came up short again as the Vikings lost in the NFC Championship to the New Orleans Saints. Favre has made no decisions on retirement, and perhaps even he does not know how long his NFL career might last.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW & CONCEPT EXPLICATION

Even from the early days in Favre's career, media coverage of the "gunslinger" (Battista, 2008a) has been in high demand. His easy-going personality and incredible athletic achievements made him a popular target for journalists from local to international outlets and everything in between. Important milestones in Favre's career, especially the rollercoaster of events that unfolded between his first and second retirements, were given ample coverage by a variety of media outlets. Newspapers were especially gratuitous in their devotion of headlines, articles, and pages to the Favre story whether national papers (e.g., *New York Times* and *USA Today*) or more regional ones (e.g., *Green Bay Press Gazette*). However, the quality and content of the coverage are likely to vary between these types of newspapers, based on previous research in this area.

Framing theory offers one way to compare and contrast coverage of events among different newspapers. In fact, framing studies have been used to observe differences in newspaper coverage of wars (Carpenter, 2007), anti-war protests (Peng, 2008), terrorism (Papacharissi & Oliviera, 2008), hate crimes (Husselbee & Elliott, 2002), disasters (Ploughman, 1995) and politics (Segvic, 2005). Though Dayan and Katz's (1992) studies are somewhat relevant to Favre's retirement storyline, there remains a lack of information about coverage of historic sports events and the athletes involved in them that might suggest expected differences in framing by newspapers.

In addition to framing theory, structural pluralism may further explain differences found between national and regional coverage of the Favre story (Olien, Donohue, & Tichenor, 1968). Structural pluralism refers to the tendencies of different newspapers to report conflict in news stories. The following is a summary of previous research on framing theory and structural pluralism.

### **Framing Theory**

Framing offered a theoretical basis useful in studying national and regional newspaper coverage of Favre during the roughly one-year period that included the first whisperings of his retirement from the Packers, their unceremonious break-up, his trade to the New York Jets, and his second retirement at the end of his season with the Jets. Framing research in general has shown that how issues are covered affects how readers and viewers interpret the news and the people in it (Baran & Davis, 2009; Husselbee & Elliot, 2002). In the most basic sense, frames help tell stories by placing importance on certain parts of a message at the expense of others, affecting the way audiences perceive the message (Entman, 2007; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). This highlights Gamson's (1989) idea that facts do not have meaning in and of themselves—they gain meaning when placed within the context of a story or frame.

Goffman was one of the first to promote the idea of framing in academic literature. Goffman's (1974) original idea of frame analysis explained how people navigated through everyday experiences. A *frame* referred to a set of expectations that helped organize or make sense of a social situation at a certain time (Baran & Davis, 2009; Goffman, 1974). Goffman also acknowledged ability of the media to

affect frames and influence how we see the world, pointing out that much news is about *frame violations*, or events that are newsworthy because of their deviation from social norms (Goffman, 1974, 1979).

Other scholars have built on Goffman's frame analysis. Using the idea of frames as organizational guidelines or rules, Tuchman (1976, 1978) determined that news presentations constructed a version of reality and were often framed in a way that advanced the status quo and reinforced societal norms. Gamson (1989) and Gitlin's (1980) findings also supported Tuchman's conclusion that frames often served to promote certain ways of seeing events at the expense of other interpretations. According to Gamson (1989), frames observed in public discourse are largely used by elites motivated to promote their own interpretations of social reality at the expense of others. Gitlin (1980) held that while frames are "largely unspoken and unacknowledged," (p.7) they served to organize events and issues both for journalists and their audiences.

Others scholars have also brought their own definitions and interpretations to the meaning of framing. De Vreese (2005) noted, "framing involves a communication source presenting and defining an issue" (p. 51). Husselbee and Elliot (2002) emphasized the feature of framing that highlights certain aspects of a story while excluding others. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) explained that frames are central, organizing principles that are contained within and help structure "media packages" (p. 3). Altheide (1996) emphasized the function of frames in defining situations, underscoring the importance of these "broad, thematic emphases" (p.30) for readers' understanding of communication media. While each

of the explanations contributed to the understanding of framing, a widely accepted, universal definition of framing is still lacking (de Vreese, 2005; Hallahan, 1999; Entman, 1993).

The varying definitions of framing reflect both the wide range of operationalizations in the research, the different levels of framing studied, and the vast array of disciplines that utilize framing theory, from the humanities to the sciences (Entman, 1993; Hallahan, 1999; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). In addition, framing depends on context, which helps establish frames of reference that guide researchers and audience members in analyzing information and comprehending meaning (Hallahan, 1999). However, this array of contexts results in widely varying operationalizations, and often makes comparisons between framing studies difficult, especially across disciplines. That framing can be studied on the macro level (how journalists use frames to present information to audiences) and the micro level (how individuals use information presented by the media to form their own impressions and evaluations) further muddles comparability between studies (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Clearly, careful explication is required when studying framing (Hallahan, 1999).

There is also little consensus on how to consistently identify news frames (de Vreese, 2005). Gamson and Modigliani (1989) suggest framing occurs through the use of metaphors, exemplars, catch phrases, depictions, and visual images. Tankard's (2001 as cited in de Vreese, 2005) list of framing devices includes headlines, subheads, photos, photo captions, leads, source selection, quotes selection, pull quotes, logo, statistics and charts, and concluding statements and



paragraphs (p. 54). Pan and Kosicki (1993) identified syntactical, script, thematic, and rhetorical structures that enable framing, while Entman (1993) studied framing through the use or non-use of certain keywords, phrases, images, sources, and the use of supplementary facts or opinions.

According to Entman (1993), framing can occur in “at least four different locations in the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture” (p.52). *Communicators* decide which elements of a story to include or exclude. Frames also occur in *text*, signaled by the presence of Entman’s framing devices, as well as others mentioned previously. Frames also help *receivers* form judgments, who may accept or reject the frames presented by the communicator and text. Finally, the *culture* in which the news is presented also has implications for framing; common cultural understandings by the majority of persons in a certain social grouping can affect the framing of messages (Entman, 1993). In other words, not only do the media frame information for the audience, but the audience also frames the information it is presented with (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992). In addition to Entman’s list, other researchers suggest that elite sources can also play a role in framing news (Druckman, 2001; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

Despite their different potential locations, Entman (1993, 2004) notes that frames serve similar functions in each area: problem definition, causal analysis, moral judgment, and remedy promotion. These functions, some of which may occur simultaneously, are accomplished by salience and selection of information (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997) and involve making certain information more “noticeable,

meaningful, or memorable to audiences” through repetition, placement, or association with certain symbols (Entman 1993, p. 53). Conversely, some information is treated as secondary, tertiary, or completely excluded (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997). As Entman (1993) points out, the information that is omitted is often as important as what is included when defining frames.

Because of the variety of frame locations within the communication process, the research varies in attention paid to this aspect. Much of the literature has focused on framing effects at the individual and societal levels (de Vreese, 2005). Pan and Kosicki (1993) have studied the sources from which journalists gather information for stories and also noted that framing effects should take into account audience attitudes and perceptions. However, others have held that the existence of frames does not necessarily mean they will influence the audience (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Entman, 1993). In fact, many scholars note the importance of isolating frames within the texts themselves, independent of framing effects on audiences. Entman (1993) and Gamson (1989) find this especially important in content analysis, where they suggest the focus should be on journalists’ framing of issues rather than audience perceptions. Gurevitch and Levy’s work validates the study of texts alone (as cited in Gamson & Modigliani, 1989), noting that texts are critical in the “construction of social reality” (p.3) independent of the meaning implied by the communicator.

Many textual framing studies employ content analysis, which Entman (1993) suggests should look further than dominant meanings and positive or negative messages. Instead, the salient elements that receive emphasis in the text should be

observed as well. Altheide's (1996) extensive work on content analysis meets this challenge, delving deep into textual analysis and relying heavily on the use of themes to complement frames. Themes "are the recurring, typical theses that run through ... reports," while frames "are the focus, a parameter or boundary, for discussing a particular event" (Altheide 1996, p. 31). Altheide (1996) also points out that certain themes are more apt to be used when corresponding frames are adopted.

It is clear from the literature that frames can be defined and studied based on a variety of factors, but this study focused on textual frames within national and regional newspaper stories covering the Favre storyline from retirement to return to retirement again.

### **Structural Pluralism Theory**

Any observed framing differences between national and regional coverage of Favre's retirement may be explained based on community structure and the related concept of structural pluralism first pointed out by Donohue, Olien, & Tichenor (1968). They found less conflict is reported when pluralism is lowest (usually in small communities with consistently uniform beliefs and opinions), while social systems tend to report more conflict as pluralism and community complexity increase, as is often the case in larger areas. Since the early studies on structural pluralism, many researchers have confirmed this trend (Demers, 1994; Donohue, Olien, & Tichenor, 1985; Hindman, 1996; Hindman, Littlefield, Preston, & Neumann, 1999; McCluskey, et al., 2003), though some research has found the opposite to be true (Mikelson, 2007).

The structural pluralism model views the media system as a subset of the community, and media are seen as reflective of the size and diversity of the community (Jeffres, Cutietta, Sekerka, & Lee, 2000). Smaller, local mass media appear to reinforce community norms and values, while more complex communities have more diverse groups competing for power and thus, have a wider range of control mechanisms, which are reflected by more diverse news reports. Put another way, smaller communities' media tend to present the community in its best light—void of conflict. Media in larger communities are more likely to include conflict in news coverage (Hindman, 1996). Fuller's (1996) work (as cited in McCluskey, et al., 2003) suggests that in order to survive, newspapers must reflect the needs of the specific audience they serve. National and regional newspaper audiences, as well as the management of the different newspapers, likely had very different expectations of media reports concerning Favre's retirement. Any observed differences in newspaper coverage of Favre's retirement might be explained, at least in part, by structural pluralism.

The concept of structural pluralism has been studied in a variety of contexts, including the effects of corporate ownership on the diversity reflected in newspaper reports (Demers, 1994), inclusion of ethnic groups in reporting (Hindman, et al., 1999), coverage of protests (McCluskey, et al., 2003), the influence of editors' goals and objectives on news reports (Jeffres, et al., 2000), and a controversial wolf reintroduction in Idaho (Mikelson, 2007). However, the literature lacks information on how sports-related topics might be covered, much less reporting on a historic

series of events involving a world-renowned athlete. The Favre study may provide important information on this phenomenon.

### **Concept Explication**

Though numerous definitions of 'frame' have been suggested and used in research, Entman's (1993) idea of framing has been widely utilized in the literature and his definition will be used in this study. He stated:

Framing essentially involves *selection* and *salience*. To frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation* for the item described (p. 52).

Previous research involving comparative studies of newspapers has employed a wide range of variables for explaining differences between publications. Circulation size has often been cited as a defining characteristic of newspapers. Circulation is simply the number of newspapers distributed, and this can vary daily. Correlations between circulation size and such variables as community size, diversity of coverage, depth of coverage, and advertising revenues have been observed in the literature (Chen, Thorson, & Lacy, 2005; Gans, 1979; Gartner, 2004; Haider-Markell, Allen, & Johansen, 2006; Lacy & Bernstein, 1988; Rosenberry, 2005; Shapiro & Schofield, 1986).

Differing classifications of newspapers based on circulation numbers have been used in the research. Lacy and Bernstein (1988) classified newspapers as small (under 30,000), medium (30,001-99,999), and large (100,000 and above)

based on an average daily circulation. Kim and Meyer (2005) also used this classification in their respective studies of newspaper content as related to circulation size. In a 2003 study, Lacy and Blanchard classified “mid-sized” (p. 949) newspapers as having a circulation between 25,000 and 100,000. Chen, Thorson, and Lacy (2005) grouped small and medium newspapers together by circulation size and defined both as having average daily circulations less than 85,000. Yet other studies have cited 50,000 as the cutoff point distinguishing small newspapers from large ones (Garrison, 1999; Lauterer, 2000).

Some researchers have studied circulation distinctions between *small*, *medium*, and *large* newspapers, but without specifying the circulation numbers for which each of the classifications were relevant (Picard & Rimmer, 1999). Others employed labels like *local* or *larger* without defining what is meant by the term or putting it in the context of a *non-local* or *smaller* newspaper (Eshbaugh-Soha, 2008; Sylvie, 1991). Still others have simply grouped newspapers by circulation, referring to their subsets as Group 1, Group 2, etc., without reference to how others have specified these circulation values (Tharp & Stanley, 1992), making comparisons among the literature difficult if not impossible. Future studies employing these types of classifications and comparisons would be well advised to make clear the circulation sizes or locations at which their data is relevant.

Geographic focus of coverage has been another distinguishing factor among newspaper classifications in the literature. Carpenter (2007) examined differences in coverage frames of the Iraq war between *elite* and *non-elite* newspapers. She classified both groups as large circulation papers, but distinguished between the

two based on the area for which each provided news. Elite papers delivered information to a *national* geographic area while non-elite papers focused on statewide coverage for a designated area. Ploughman (1995) also used location to differentiate between publications in her analysis of coverage of the New-York based Love Canal disaster. Local, regional, and national media were distinguished based on proximity to the disaster site.

Both circulation size and geographic location will be useful to differentiate between the newspapers for the present study (see Table 2.1). The newspapers to analyze include the *Green Bay Press Gazette*, the *New York Times*, and *USA Today*. Each has differing circulation sizes, days of circulation, and at the very least, a slightly different geographic coverage area (Audit Bureau of Circulation, 2009).

**Table 2.1: Sample Newspapers, Circulation Sizes, and Classifications**

Newspaper	Location	Weekday Circulation	Saturday Circulation	Sunday Circulation	Average Circulation*	Classification
<i>Green Bay Press Gazette</i>	Green Bay, WI	51,005	61,237	75,295	55,937	Regional
<i>The New York Times</i>	New York, NY	1,000,665	965,417	1,438,585	1,058,190	National
<i>USA Today</i>	McLean, VA	2,293,310	n/a	n/a	2,293,310	National

\*Average circulation numbers were calculated by multiplying weekday circulation rates by 5, adding Saturday and Sunday circulation numbers to the total, and dividing by 7 (Long, et al., 2005).

Based on the criteria of circulation numbers and locale served, the *Green Bay Press Gazette* will be classified as a regional newspaper. While it does serve the *local* residents of the Green Bay area, it serves the greater northeastern Wisconsin area as well (Green Bay Press Gazette, 2007).

Both *The New York Times* and *USA Today* will be classified as national newspapers, based on circulation numbers, as well as the wide range of nationally

relevant topics covered by each (Audit Bureau of Circulation, 2009). While there are other criteria by which these three papers could be differentiated, for the purposes of this study, circulation and location of coverage will serve as the distinguishing factors. Within the two national papers, some difference in coverage is to be expected; many researchers have compared these publications (Bloch-Elkon, 2007; Boykoff, 2006; Kian, 2008; King, 1990; Kumar, 2001). While researchers have noted that both the *New York Times* and *USA Today* are major U.S. papers with liberal ideologies (Bloch-Elkon, 2007; Boykoff, 2006), there are marked differences between the two (Kian, 2008; Kumar, 2001).

The *New York Times* is considered an elite, agenda setting, prestige newspaper aimed at an elite readership (Bloch-Elkon, 2007; Carpenter, 2007; Fiss & Hirsch, 2005; Kumar, 2001; Papacharissi & Oliveira, 2008). *USA Today* has been classified simply as a popular publication geared toward a more general, broad-based audience (King, 1990). Further, *USA Today's* sports reporting has been noted as an important feature for the paper's continued success (Kim, Walkosz, & Iverson, 2006). In some past cases, *USA Today* actually surpassed regional sports coverage of local events (Taffe, 1986). A preliminary LexisNexis search produced a reasonable number of relevant articles for both newspapers, therefore the decision to include articles from both the *New York Times* and *USA Today* was made, as each paper is unique and will contribute differently to the study.



## **CHAPTER 3: METHODS**

### **Methodology**

Content analysis was the methodology used for the study. Content analysis was supported by its use in numerous comparative studies of newspaper articles (Husselbee & Elliott, 2002; Papacharissi & Oliveira, 2008; Peng, 2008; Segvic, 2005). The Favre articles lent themselves well to this type of analysis, as there was no shortage of available newspaper coverage discussing his retirement, un-retirement, and his season-long tenure with the New York Jets. However, while content analysis is often done quantitatively, the qualitative approach utilized here acknowledges the individual researcher as a medium through which a study occurs.

As Altheide (1996) notes, the difference between quantitative content analysis and his ethnographic content analysis (ECA) is the “reflexive and highly interactive nature of the investigator, concepts, data collection, and analysis ... the investigator is continually central in ECA,” (p. 16). Though ethnography was traditionally thought of as an account of people and their culture (Schwartz and Jacobs, 1979 as cited in Altheide, 1987a), it can also be used as a methodology regardless of any specific subject matter. Altheide was the first to specifically isolate this method, though he combined ideas from a host of other researchers (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, as cited in Altheide, 1987a; Plummer, 1983, as cited in Altheide, 1987a). In addition to the immense media attention to this story, my Wisconsin roots and lifelong interest in the Packers made the study personally relevant.

My connection to this topic, in addition to the wide-reaching interest in Favre, makes the ECA methodology fitting for this project. Altheide and Johnson (1994) note the significant interaction of the researcher, the subject of the study, and the sense-making process in qualitative inquiry. Additionally, the researcher, concepts, data collection, and analysis do not follow a rigid chain of events. Though being systematic and analytic is important, following a strict protocol is not. Therefore, events and analysis are not forced into exacting, predefined categories. Some categories serve as the central starting point of the study, but many are added as data collection and analysis occur. Data are often coded in a way that makes them relevant for multiple purposes, so providing good descriptive information is also vital (Altheide, 1987a; 1996).

Although this type of qualitative analysis has protocol grounded in theory and concepts, the emergent findings are not focused on building theory in the positivist sense of identifying variables whose existence leads to predictive behaviors (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Rather, the focus is on giving clear descriptions and definitions that reflect the documents under scrutiny. In so doing, the researcher is able to make broad statements about the state of contemporary human experience. In ECA this is done utilizing many of the same rigorous tools of more positivistic scientific strategies, such as constant comparison, contrast, and theoretical sampling. (Altheide, 1996).

Altheide's ECA also involves the idea of tracking discourse, or "following certain issues, words, themes, and frames over a period of time, across different issues, and across different news media" (Altheide, 2001, p. 309). Altheide explains

tracking discourse as very similar to framing, and it allows meaning to be understood across an entire collection of documents (Altheide, 1987a; 1996), such as the newspaper articles that describe and dissect Favre's retirement, un-retirement, and additional season in the NFL. Cook's (1992) work (as cited in Garrett & Bell, 1998) also contributes to the understanding of discourse and framing, stating that this form of study is concerned not only with language, but the context in which text is used. This approach also allows the researcher to examine the documents in more depth, which can result in additional areas in which to conduct studies on the same topic and ideas for future research (Altheide, 1996).

Numerous studies have demonstrated that public understanding of issues often incorporates media-presented information, showing that news reports have meaning and consequence in social life (Altheide, 1996; Goffman, 1974; Tuchman, 1978). According to Altheide (1996), this is why discourse, or framing, is important. Altheide et al. (2001) also note that frame analysis lends itself well to the study of changes in theoretical samples of documents over time (p. 306). Because the Favre storyline spanned the period of nearly a year from his first to his second retirement, Altheide's (1996) ECA methodology was appropriate for this study.

### **Sampling**

Newspaper coverage of this story had clear start and end points, and articles from both national media outlets (*New York Times*, *USA Today*) and regional ones (*Green Bay Press Gazette*) were readily available for the sample period. The dates and events in Table 3.1 served as a starting point for newspaper article sampling

(*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* Online, 2009); individual articles served as the unit of analysis.

**Table 3.1: Favre Timeline of Important Events**

February 28, 2008	Dark site <sup>1</sup> accidentally mis-announces Favre's retirement on Packers.com
March 4, 2008	Favre retires from the Green Bay Packers after 17 years in the NFL (16 with the Packers)
March 6, 2008	Favre tearfully and officially retires at a live press conference in Green Bay
June 20, 2008	Favre tells Packers he may want to return
July 11, 2008	Favre asks for release by the Green Bay Packers so he can be a free agent; Packers deny this request
July 29, 2008	Favre asks for NFL reinstatement
August 3, 2008	Favre returns to Green Bay to report to training camp but the Packers trade him to the New York Jets
August 8, 2008	Favre introduced as the Jets starting quarterback
September 9, 2008	Favre starts his first game for the Jets
December 28, 2008	Favre and Jets lose their final regular season game and are knocked out of playoff contention
February 11, 2009	Favre retires from the New York Jets after one season

A major purpose of qualitative document analysis is to gain an understanding of the meanings and themes of messages and how these drive the organization and presentation of news. Again, these new understandings are ultimately meant to indicate trends and patterns of contemporary social experience (Altheide, 2000). This underscores the need to have a representative sample that includes the widest range of important, relevant messages. However, a researcher often does not have a clear understanding of exactly what to include in the sample at the beginning of the research. This will often emerge over the course of analysis (Altheide, 1987a). Altheide (1996) does suggest that the researcher have an 'ideal' about the materials that will be included in the study, though this model is subject to change over time. Based on this ideal, and Altheide's (1996) suggestions, the initial outline of categories for inclusion was determined and is shown in Table 3.2.

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<sup>1</sup> A "dark site" is a pre-established, website with inactive links that can be quickly published to the Web in the event of an emergency or crisis (Coombs, 2007).

**Table 3.2: Initial Categories for Analysis**

Case number	Medium (news-paper)	Date	Title	Frame	Theme	Location (section of paper)	Length (Words)
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Other categories for initial observation included author, tone (positive, negative, neutral), presence of conflict in the article, sources quoted, and a miscellaneous category for any thoughts and ideas that did not fit into the predetermined labels. Other relevant categories emerged during the study, as was expected by ECA protocol (Altheide, 1996). These included whether Favre was the main topic of the article, and the main source quoted in the article (if more than one was used).

Because the events in Table 3.1 were clearly important to the story line, the use of a random sample may not have included some articles important to the understanding of Favre's retirement. Therefore, Altheide's (1996) idea of "cluster sampling," (p.36), or a "saturation method" (p.19), was initially used to select news articles for analysis. The dates of the key events represented the emergence of information that was important to understanding the story as a whole. However, newspaper coverage was not confined to the single date on which the events took place. Therefore, at the beginning of sampling, newspaper articles were included for analysis up to three days after the event to observe how the storyline unfolded. However, the situation revolving around Favre was so salient that the key events were deemed newsworthy for much longer than three days, especially in the *Green Bay Press Gazette*. Therefore, *all* Favre stories published during the sample period were included, regardless of how long after the "important event" a particular

article was published. This type of protocol adjustment is often expected in ECA and is called “progressive theoretical sampling” (Altheide, 1996, p. 33).

The *New York Times* and *USA Today* sample articles were obtained from the LexisNexis online media database. After a quick search in the database (search string: “Brett Favre” AND “retires” OR “retirement” OR “out of retirement” OR “unretired” OR “unretires”) the *Times* returned roughly 100 articles and *USA Today* retrieved about 75 articles. Microfilm of the *Green Bay Press Gazette* was borrowed from the Wisconsin State Historical Society through Colorado State University’s Morgan Library. The microfilm was searched for articles that met the criteria mentioned above. As expected, the volume of newspaper articles was larger for this paper, based on the impact Favre’s retirement had on the Green Bay community, as shown in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3: Newspapers and Sample Sizes**

Newspaper	Total # of Articles Retrieved	Total # of Relevant Articles
<i>Green Bay Press Gazette</i>	212*	212
<i>The New York Times</i>	71	45
<i>USA Today</i>	62	25

\*The total number of articles retrieved for the *Green Bay Press Gazette* is equal to the total number of relevant articles because these articles were collected directly from the publication at the discretion of the researcher. The articles for the *New York Times* and *USA Today* were obtained using a LexisNexis search and then screened by the researcher for relevance to the study.

The actual analysis of the articles followed Altheide’s (1996) protocol:

1. Pursue a specific problem to be investigated.
2. Become familiar with the process and context of the information source.
3. Become familiar with several (6 to 10) examples of relevant documents, noting particularly the format; select a unit of analysis (e.g., newspaper articles).
4. List several items or categories (variables) to guide data collection and draft a protocol (data collection sheet).
5. Test the protocol by collecting data from several documents.
6. Revise the protocol and select several additional cases to further refine the protocol.
7. Arrive at a sampling rationale and strategy.
8. Collect the data, using preset codes and descriptive examples.

9. Perform data analysis, including conceptual refinement and data coding. Read notes and data repeatedly and thoroughly.
10. Compare and contrast “extremes” and “key differences” within each category; make textual notes; write brief summaries or overviews of data for each category.
11. Combine the brief summaries with an example of the typical case as well as the extremes. Illustrate with materials from the protocol(s) for each case; note surprises and curiosities.
12. Integrate the findings with your interpretation and key concepts in another draft.

## Project

Comprehensive records were kept for tasks required for completion of the thesis. Table 3.4 contains time totals for each step of the process.

**Table 3.4: Project Timesheet**

Task	Newspaper	Time (hours)	Totals
Data Collection	Green Bay Press Gazette	22.5	24.25
	New York Times		
	USA Today	1.75	
Organization/adding hyperlinks to files in Excel	Green Bay Press Gazette	12.75	12.75
Coding	Green Bay Press Gazette	38.25	38.25
	New York Times	16.25	16.25
	USA Today	11	11
Article Length Search Online	Green Bay Press Gazette	5	5
Analysis/Discussion	All publications	55.5	55.5
Conclusions	All publications	10.75	10.75
Thesis Editing	--	59.35	65.35
<b>Totals</b>			<b>250.1</b>

## **CHAPTER 4: FRAMES AND THEMES**

### **Frames**

According to Altheide (1996), “Theoretically, frames and themes are crucial in defining situations and provide much of the rationale for document analysis. These are the most powerful features of public information, and the study of their origins, how they change over time, and their taken-for-granted use in everyday life is essential to understanding the relevance of communication media for our lives,” (p. 31). Because of this, frames and themes were given the most consideration in this study, though all of the categories for analysis were thoroughly contemplated.

In a nod to the extent of Favre’s popularity, the newspaper articles covering his retirements were varied and used multiple frames to tell the numerous stories about him. Each newspaper had a different way of telling these stories, though the three publications included in the study also shared some commonalities in their coverage. Altheide (1996) thinks of frames as “broad thematic emphases or definitions of a report, similar to the border around a picture that separates it from the wall and from other possibilities,” (p. 30). For example, some stories were about Favre’s athletic achievements, while others focused on his charity work. Different frames in the study represented these varying aspects of coverage. There were many different ways of presenting the Favre storyline, highlighting certain issues at the expense of other possible ways of telling the story.



While percentages and numbers are listed below in relation to the categories used to analyze the newspaper articles about Favre, it is important to reiterate that this is not meant to be a quantitative analysis. The numbers are simply used to put differences and similarities in coverage into perspective. The coding scheme in Appendix A contains the entire list of frames utilized in the study.

### ***Green Bay Press Gazette***

The most common frame used by the *Green Bay Press Gazette* was “Moving forward,” observed in 17.2% of the *GBPG* articles. This frame put Favre’s (and by default, the Packers’ and/or Jets’ in some instances) options and future actions into perspective and suggested to the reader what might come next in the Favre storyline. This frame was evident in articles that focused largely on speculation about Favre’s future. Often, when Favre’s indecision did not offer much substance for stories, suppositions or theories were presented regarding his future and how involved parties would be affected. Most of these stories were published in the days and weeks after Favre’s ‘itch’ to return was first publicized, though this frame was also used immediately after Favre retired from the Packers.

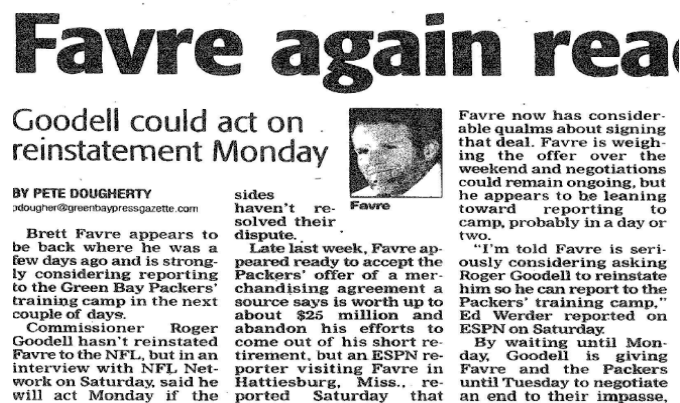


Figure 4.1: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, August 8, 2008, News/Sports (A1,C1,C3)

The above excerpt was from an article framed as “Moving forward,” outlining the situation that materialized between Favre and the Packers after Favre decided to pursue his football career after initially retiring. The article described the options for Favre and the Packers, including allowing Favre to attend training camp and anchor the Packers as he had done for 16 seasons, paying Favre a sizeable sum of money in a personal services contract to ensure he remained a retired Green Bay Packer, or trading Favre, preferably to a team outside the Packer’s division and conference to avoid a matchup against Favre’s new team during the season. These options on how the Packers and Favre could move forward were repeatedly discussed and dissected in the *Green Bay Press Gazette* throughout this uncertain time.

However, there were other instances in which the “Moving forward” frame was used.

## **Murphy, team will miss Favre**

Atrium. “We’re obviously going to miss him, and he meant so much to the organization and to the league, but I’m really happy for him. Especially seeing him in that press conference (Thursday), such a heartfelt, emotional press conference, and I’m really happy that a player can have such a great career, and to leave at the height of his game really speaks volumes about him, and I think it really, to me, spoke very highly of the organization ... the kind of a organization that has a player like that and just been a perfect marriage.

**Figure 4.2: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, March 8, 2008, Sports (C3); Tom Pelissero**

In this article excerpt, team President Mark Murphy expressed surprise at Favre's retirement from the Packers, but ultimately supported Favre's decision to bow out at the height of his career to enjoy his future endeavors.

"Judgment" was the second most common frame used by the *GBPG*. This frame was observed in 16.3% of the Favre stories. The judgment frame was the newspaper's way of playing Monday morning quarterback and questioning Favre's decisions, praising his choices, or finding a middle ground on the entire situation. This frame was most often utilized to convey opinions on the situation with Favre's desire to return to Green Bay and reclaim the starting quarterback job. However, judgment was also used to frame stories in the days immediately after Favre's first and second retirements, and to critique the Packers' decision to trade Favre to the Jets.

**Critics in  
minority,  
can't vex  
Thompson**

But the majority of stockholders offered their allegiance to the man calling the shots in the Green Bay football operation.

If this was a referendum on the Packers' handling of the Favre situation, Thompson was the overwhelming winner.

Figure 4.3: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, July 25, 2008; Sports (C1); Mike Vandermause

This excerpt provided an example of the "Judgment" frame, indicating that despite some vocal naysayers, most of the attendees at the Packers annual meeting

supported Ted Thompson's decision to stick with Rodgers and send Favre packing to the New York Jets.

Judgment was also obvious in the following excerpt about Favre's second retirement, this time from the New York Jets.

### **Final chapter closes too late**

Too bad he didn't stick to his original instincts and hang it up in 2008. Favre, along with the rest of the football world, would have been spared a lot of consternation, disappointment, bitterness and disillusionment.

What did Favre accomplish by insisting on playing one more season? He had nothing to prove, and lingering too long only served to damage what had been an impeccable legacy.

**Figure 4.4: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, February 12, 2009, Sports (B1); Mike Vandermause**

This Mike Vandermause article clearly showed disapproval of Favre's decision to return to football as a New York Jet. He cited Favre's poor play in the latter half of the season as evidence of his now tarnished legacy—something that could have been prevented had Favre remained retired.

The third most common frame used was "Celebration/remembrance of Favre." This frame showed up in 13.5% of the sample GBPG articles on Favre, and was most commonly observed after Favre's first retirement. Fans, players, coaches, family, and everyone in between recounted Favre's historic, record-setting career, finding numerous unique and common ways to lavish praise on the legendary quarterback.

# Teammates related to his down-to-earth, fun-loving mentality

BY ROB DEMOVSKY

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Few people can better understand why Brett Favre walked away from football on Tuesday than those who played alongside him.

Though Favre seemingly had multiple reasons to return — a potential Super Bowl-contending team, a \$12 million salary and most of his MVP-caliber abilities intact — when the overriding reason he retired was revealed, it made sense to those who know him and know the rigors of playing the toughest position in the NFL.

Figure 4.5: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, March 5, 2008, Special Favre Section (p. 5)

This excerpt noted that Favre's teammates enjoyed his presence and leadership in the locker room, though many understood the mental fatigue that led to Favre's retirement from the Packers.

Even during the months when the standstill between Favre and the Packers over his desire to return to the NFL reached epic heights, the *Press Gazette* found ways to honor Favre in its articles.

## Favre-Packers impasse takes back seat to the honorees

BY TONY WALTER  
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Brett Favre's return to Green Bay on Saturday was advertised as a gesture to a friend.

It became more than that in the Lambeau Field Atrium, but for one night pushed aside the legendary quarterback's standoff with the Green Bay Packers, and put on hold for a few hours the unpleasantness that has become the national Summer of Favre.

Favre joined 1,300 others at the annual Packers Hall of Fame banquet where he presented former teammate Frank Winters for induction into the hall. He also received the team's most valuable player award sponsored by Miller/Coors.

Sitting about 30 feet from Packers General Manager Ted Thompson, Head Coach Mike McCarthy, former GM Ron Wolf and President Emeritus Bob Harlan, Favre avoided any reference to the controversy over his retirement and professed desire to continue playing.

"Let's have some fun and celebrate their night," Favre said of Hall inductees Winters, Al Treml and Gilbert Brown, when accepting the MVP award.

**Photo galleries, audio, video online**  
Visit [www.PackersNews.com](http://www.PackersNews.com) for photo galleries, audio and video from the Packers Hall of Fame induction ceremony and features on the inductees.

**More inside**  
► How times have changed, C-1  
► Mike Vandermause column: Favre said all the right things, C-1  
► See Favre, A-2

Figure 4.6: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, July 20, 2008, Main Section (A1-2)

As this excerpt recounted, Favre was a presenter for his friend and former teammate, Frank Winters, at the Packers Hall of Fame induction ceremony. Favre received the team's Most Valuable Player award for the 2007-2008 season at the

ceremony as well. Though the Packers and Favre were most decidedly having their differences at this point, there was no disputing that Favre had been the key to the previous season's success, and he was praised for his performance and contributions to the Packers.

The frame "Favre vs. Rodgers—Comparisons and Competition" was the fourth most common frame in the *GBPG* coverage, utilized 8.8% of the time. As this frame straightforwardly suggests, Favre and his successor, Aaron Rodgers, were closely compared and contrasted. The *Press Gazette*, like many Green Bay fans and residents, could not help but break down the situation into a matchup between the two quarterbacks.



Figure 4.7: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, August 4, 2008, Sports (C1)

This article suggested that while Aaron Rodgers had expressed his preparedness for a quarterback competition with Favre, the skills he showed off at a pre-season scrimmage did not instill much confidence in observers. The article essentially counted Rodgers out in a one-on-one competition with Favre.

These four frames (Moving forward, Judgment, Celebration/remembrance of Favre, and Favre vs. Rodgers—comparisons and competition) accounted for over

half of the *Green Bay Press Gazette* stories about Favre—56% of stories (120 articles of 212) used these frames. However, it is important to remember that the most common frames were not necessarily the most important. The *Press Gazette* used numerous other frames to structure the remaining stories, many of which were unique and contributed to the richness of the Favre coverage.

For example, the *Green Bay Press Gazette* was the only publication to use the frame “Favre’s early career (high school and college days),” and this idea only structured one story. However, the frame and corresponding article gave important, rare details on Favre’s formative years.

# ‘The boy’s got an arm’

BY ROB DEMOVSKY  
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## Favre’s talent almost went unnoticed out of high school

Even now, after more than two decades, Mark McHale wonders what made him reconsider and take another trip to the backwoods of Kiln, Miss.

In a way, he’s haunted by it. Why, when every bit of his football intelligence and all those years of evaluating players told him otherwise, did he give this kid a second thought?

And — here’s the part that really scares him — what would have happened if he hadn’t?

The man — the only man — who recruited the raw quarterback out of Hancock North Central High School shuddered at the notion that everyone in the football world, himself included, came so perilously close to bypassing Brett Favre.

“I’ve thought about that a million times,” McHale said in a phone inter-

view. Most Valuable Player awards, a Super Bowl ring and just about every passing record the league tracks.

Only minutes after Favre said goodbye during a tearful news conference on Thursday at Lambeau Field, McHale recalled the happenstance meeting that gave him reason to question his gut feeling on his first trip to Kiln.

Favre’s foray into big-time football probably never should have happened. McHale was in his first season as an assistant coach at Southern Mississippi. His recruiting area included Kiln and the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Working off a list of potential recruits compiled by the previous offensive line coach, Bill D’Andrea, who left for Clemson, McHale set out to find players, including quarterbacks.

Favre was nowhere on his list

through this area before me.” Then I heard it a second time and when I heard it a third time, I looked up Hancock North Central and called the head coach. So that’s where it started.”

The head coach was Brett’s father, Irvin.

Knowing next to nothing about the Favres, McHale showed up at his high school eager to find out why those nearby coaches talked him up. He sat down at a desk inside a rickety fieldhouse where Irvin Favre had his coaching office. There were tapes scattered about, and McHale settled in to watch.

“I didn’t see anything,” McHale said. “Bless his heart, Irvin was running the Wing-T (offense), and all Brett was doing was handing it off. We couldn’t even find a pass on the tape. There were tapes everywhere,

weights.

“Irvin yelled, ‘C’mere boy.’ And Irvin looked at me and said, ‘That’s my quarterback, coach.’ Brett looked me right in the eye and shook my hand and said, ‘Coach, I can play for you,’ just oozing with confidence.”

Recruiting rules prevented McHale from talking to high school players at that time, so McHale shook the young quarterback’s hand and left.

“Driving out of there, I was going back over my recruiting like I always did, and I couldn’t get him out of my mind. I said, ‘There’s something about this kid. I’ve got to check him out.’”

McHale called back and promised he’d come to a game. After watching Favre throw some of the hardest, deepest passes he’d ever seen in pregame warm-ups, he couldn’t wait for the game to begin.

At halftime, McHale recalled that a group of fans were yelling at Irvin for his play calling. McHale only later discovered those fans were all Favre family members. Even they knew a game like that wasn’t going to be enough to convince a college recruiter that Favre was worth a scholarship. McHale conveyed that to Irvin, who convinced him to come back a second time. That time, Favre threw only four passes in the first half.

Again disappointed, McHale decided to stay for the second half only because it was too late to get to another game. Finally, McHale saw what he wanted to see. On a broken play in the second half, Favre scrambled and unloaded a pass that he said “had flames and smoke coming off it.”

“When I saw him in that second game,” McHale said, “I said, ‘This boy’s got an NFL arm, period, end of discussion. Now, let’s get him on campus.’”



Brett Favre and his Southern Mississippi teammates celebrate in a game against Tulane.

### Recruiter not surprised by quarterback’s retirement

Brett Favre’s decision to retire came as a surprise to many but not to Mark McHale.

The man who recruited Favre to Southern Mississippi knew all along 2007 was going to be Favre’s final NFL season.

McHale spent hours with Favre last summer working on the book “10 to 4” — in which McHale detailed how he discovered Favre and was the only college coach to recruit him.

Just before he left Favre’s house after their final meeting about the book — and only days before Favre reported to what would be his final training camp — McHale asked Favre the question everyone had been wanting to know for years.

“I looked at him and said, ‘Hey Brett, how much longer are you going to play?’”

Figure 4.8: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, March 9, 2008, Special Favre Section (pp. 4-5)

The excerpt above, as well as the entire article, focused on the utter implausibility that Favre would go on to play college football at all. Apparently the offense favored by his high school head coach (who just happened to be Favre's father, Irvin) consisted of mostly running plays. In fact, when Mark McHale, a recruiter from the University of Southern Mississippi came to watch him play, Favre threw only four passes in two games. However, Favre's arm strength was unmistakable. Against all odds, McHale convinced Southern Mississippi to offer Favre a scholarship for a defensive linebacker position. The rest was history.

While it was the only sample article from any of the publications that focused on Favre's early career, this one story shed light on an important and improbable chapter in Favre's story, and allowed the reader to enter into a deeper understanding of just how special Favre's career was from the very beginning.

Another frame minimally used in *GBPG* sample articles was "Favre's charitable side," observed in just three stories. It was no secret that Favre and his family used their extensive fame to generously give back to those less fortunate, and the few articles that *did* focus on this facet of Favre's life were poignant.



# Favre granted many children's wishes

Player met 11 kids from Wisconsin

BY PATTI ZARLING

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When Nikki Stuetgen was hospitalized at the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, Md., in 2005 with a rare genetic disorder, she had a 5-by-7 photo of her family on her nightstand. Next to that was an 8-by-10 picture of Brett Favre.

"The nurses would tease me, call me cheesehead," recalled Stuetgen, now a student at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. "But he was always my hero."

Stuetgen, then 16, was diagnosed with von Hippel-Landau disease, which causes tumors in the brain and spine.

"My legs became weak, and doctors didn't know why," she said. "It turns out I had a big tumor on my spine."

An operation to remove the tumor saved her legs but caused her to miss most of her senior year of high school. And she



Nicole Stuetgen had her wish granted to meet her hero, Brett Favre, in October 2006 through the Make-A-Wish Foundation. **Special to the Press-Gazette**

Many people recalled Favre's impact on the field and off this week as he announced his retirement from the Green Bay Packers. He addressed the media Thursday in a tearful goodbye. Favre and his wife, Deanna, and their charitable

wanted to meet the Packers and another 51 children from out of state who wanted to meet their hero.

When children's wishes to visit the locker room were granted, they would see a special locker next to their favorite player — often Favre.

## More coverage online

Go to [www.PackersNews.com](http://www.PackersNews.com) for links to our Brett Favre tribute page and a special section on Brett Favre's retirement, including stories, photos, video, slideshows and fan comment.

trophy, a degenerative disorder that affects the brain. Anna's mother, Jennifer, said it's a very rare disease, and most patients don't live beyond age 2. Doctors call Anna's case "miraculous" Jennifer said.

Anna first met the Packers quarterback four years ago. At that time, things weren't looking so good, and her family asked Favre — and other Packers — to pray.

Favre stuck her prayer card on the family fridge, and her story was mentioned in Deanna Favre's book, "Don't Bet Against Me."

He was brought to tears when Anna gave him a hug last month at Lambeau Field at a Make-A-Wish award ceremony.

Figure 4.9: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, March 7, 2008, News (A2)

This excerpt highlighted the children to whom Favre was introduced through the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Though these kids' dreams were granted when they got to meet Favre, attend a Packer game, or tour the locker room with him, Favre often noted that he got far more out of the meetings than the children. Favre's charity, the Favre Fourward Foundation, also aided worthy causes in both Wisconsin and Mississippi. This frame, though not popularly utilized, allowed readers to see a side of Favre that had nothing to do with his athleticism.

The variety and breadth of frames utilized in telling Favre's story speaks to the incredible popularity he enjoyed in Green Bay, both as an athlete and a person. Again, despite the relative lack of use of frames like "Favre's early career" and "Favre's charitable side," stories that focused on these aspects of Favre's life offered unique insight and showcased additional reasons that Favre was not an average

athlete—and that justified studying Favre in the first place. While little-used frames could have been coded in a miscellaneous or “other” category, each frame was highlighted to emphasize the variety of the Favre coverage and the extremely varied ways to tell the Favre story.

### ***New York Times***

The most used frame in the *New York Times* coverage of the Favre storyline was “Remarriage,” structuring 18% of the articles. This included stories focused largely on Favre’s journey to the New York Jets, including the steps taken by Favre, the Packers, and the Jets for this unlikely scenario to play out. The frame also included reactions to Brett the Jet (around the NFL and beyond), Favre’s milestone performances with the Jets, and updates on Favre’s season in New York. This was understandable, as the *Times* became Favre’s hometown paper after his exile from Green Bay. The union between Favre and the Jets was not only nationally interesting, but also clearly gained importance for the more immediate, local region that the paper served, even though it was considered a *national* publication.

#### **Uniform Is Only Thing Different About Favre**

By JUDY BATTISTA  
Published: August 16, 2008

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — The touchdown pass proved that [Brett Favre](#) still prefers to throw to tight ends in the red zone. And the little fake jump pass was Favre reaching back into his personal highlight reel. But the most important play of his eagerly awaited debut for [the Jets](#), the one that proved that Favre really might change everything for his new team, might have come earlier, on his first drive.

**Figure 4.10: *New York Times*, August 17, 2008, Sports (p. 13)<sup>2</sup>**

This particular excerpt praised Favre early in his season with the Jets, offering comparisons to Favre’s exceptional performances for the Packers over the

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<sup>2</sup> All *New York Times* and *USA Today* sample articles included in the text are screenshot copies of the articles from the online versions of each publication; this was done solely for readability purposes. The text content of each online version is exactly the same as the print version. However, the dates of the online articles may differ from the print versions due to the speed of online publication.

years. The article also pointed out that despite taking a hard hit on the Jets' first offensive series in the game outlined above, the NFL's Ironman wasn't the least bit fazed. In this game, Favre delivered exactly what the Jets expected from him.

The frame "Favre as a reference point for others" was second most commonly used by the *Times*, and was seen in 13% of articles. Retirees like Drew Bledsoe (NFL), Annika Sorenstam (LPGA), and Michael Strahan (NFL) were all discussed within the context of Favre's retirement.

## Annika Sorenstam Announces Retirement

By [FRANK LITSKY](#)  
Published: May 14, 2008

Ochoa has won the tournament here the last two years and is the favorite again. But for this day, the star was Sorenstam, an Arizona graduate who lives in Orlando, Fla.

She said she watched [Brett Favre's](#) news conference in March when he announced his retirement from pro football.

"He said he loved the competition," she said. "He is just tired of the daily grind, and I feel the same way. But there's still plenty of golf to be played. I have another seven months left, and my goal is to win tournaments, many tournaments. The seven months are going to go really quickly."

**Figure 4.11: *New York Times*, May 14, 2008, Sports (D1)**

That Sorenstam referenced Favre's press conference to help readers and viewers understand her own reasons for retirement spoke to Favre's popularity, and not just in the National Football League. Well-known stars from many different sports found Favre's retirement meaningful enough to apply to their own careers.

One of the third most used frames observed in the NYT was "Moving forward," identified in 11% of the stories on Favre. Again, this frame put forth the options for both Favre and the Packers during a tumultuous time and speculated on the steps that might be taken by Favre, the Packers, or those teams interested in signing Favre. Because of the national interest in the story, it was not surprising that this frame was commonly used to structure articles. This was especially true

when the New York Jets became a viable relocation destination for Favre after Green Bay rejected his request to return.

### Who Are Likely Suitors In the Favre-a-Thon?

By MIKE TANIER  
Published: July 13, 2008

Brett Favre is apparently trying to force his way out of Green Bay, but the Packers do not seem prepared to blink.

Favre, the subject of comeback speculation since his retirement on March 6, asked the Packers on Friday to release him so he could sign with another team. The Packers responded Saturday that they would retain Favre's rights, forcing other teams to trade for his services.

**Figure 4.12: *New York Times*, July 13, 2008, Sports (p. 6)**

As this excerpt showed, during the uncertain time when Favre and the Packers seemed miles away from reaching a decision that was agreeable to both parties, speculation was rampant in newspaper coverage of the story. Numerous other sample articles guessed at which teams might be a good fit for Favre without forcing the Packers to face him during the regular season or playoffs.

The frame “Mass media coverage of Favre” was also used in 11% of *New York Times* sample articles on Favre. This frame included the many stories that focused on the intense media scrutiny received by anything Favre-related during the one-year period between his retirements. Interestingly, the mass media commented on its own reporting of this story, and did so quite often. News on Favre was in high demand, and the media found creative ways to fill the void when there was little or no new information. Lack of story was often the case, since days passed with no break in the stalemate between Favre and the Packers.

## When Favre Showed Up, News Didn't

By RICHARD SANDOMIR  
Published: August 5, 2008

For the 2 hours 37 minutes of its [Brett Favre](#) "SportsCenter" special, ESPN promised little, except a "developing story" that stayed in vitro.



There were no live shots of his arrival Monday at the [Green Bay Packers'](#) training camp, but plenty of the same clip of his arrival by jet Sunday night with his wife (and their waves to those who had come to see them).

Seemed like a nice private jet, but I didn't want to see it touch down 43 times.

Figure 4.13: *New York Times*, August 5, 2008, Sports (D1)

Because of the enormous interest in the story, however, daily articles were published containing few facts and no new information. The above excerpt was from an article that criticized an ESPN 'breaking news story', for little happened in the nearly three hours that the network's reporters broadcast live from Green Bay. At the time, fans anxiously awaited Favre's return, possibly to reclaim his starting job from Aaron Rodgers.

The frame "Favre's durability" was the fifth most popular used in the *New York Times* coverage of the Favre storyline, observed in 9% of the sample articles. Despite his reign as the NFL's Ironman, having never missed a start in 16 seasons with the Packers, Favre's struggles at the end of his season with the Jets raised serious questions about his resilience. It was not surprising that the *New York Times* structured many stories using this frame, as Favre's steady decline down the stretch was a main factor in the Jets narrowly missing the playoffs, a salient topic in New York.

## Favre Ponders His Future With Jets

By JOSHUA ROBINSON

Published: December 25, 2008

That run was even better a few weeks ago. The Jets were fresh off two big victories -- over the New England Patriots, who had so tormented them, and the Tennessee Titans, who were undefeated at the time -- and were sitting pretty at 8-3. Their making the playoffs looked a certainty. Even the Super Bowl seemed a possibility.

A deflating defeat against the Denver Broncos sent their season spinning out of control. The Jets have lost three of their last four games, and must beat the Dolphins on Sunday and count on other results breaking their way to qualify for the postseason.

During that slide, Favre made it clear that his powers were waning. The tight spirals that used to devour yardage and slam into receivers' hands are falling short. That he has only one touchdown pass in the last four games is almost as surprising as his six interceptions over the same span. His passer rating has circled the drain, averaging 58.0 in those games.

**Figure 4.14: *New York Times*, December 25, 2008, Sports (B11)**

This excerpt was from the first of the *New York Times* articles that questioned Favre's physical abilities on the field and suggested that maybe Favre's magic had slipped away with his age. This and other similar articles focused on Favre's nagging biceps tendon injury and suggested that it was time—again—for Favre to hang up his cleats.

Collectively, these five frames (Remarriage, Favre as a reference point for others, Moving forward, Mass media coverage of Favre, and Favre's durability) accounted for 62% of the *NYT* stories on Favre (27 articles). However, similar to results of the *Green Bay Press Gazette* coverage, there were other frames used less often but undoubtedly added depth to the Favre storyline.

For example, the frame "Big Adjustments Ahead for Favre with Jets" was used just one time. This frame outlined the challenges that Favre faced as he joined the Jets organization last minute, having little familiarity with their offensive scheme, not to mention the Jets players, his new home city, and even the stadium in which he would try to work his magic.

## Favre Works on Coles Connection

By JUDY BATTISTA  
Published: August 13, 2008

Favre's comfort level grew on Wednesday, when he took [Laveranues Coles](#) aside for a chat. Coles is still so upset by the team's treatment of his friend [Chad Pennington](#) that he has declined all interview requests.

"I said, 'Look, I heard you're not talking to the media, I understand you don't want to say anything good about me, it's O.K.," Favre said, smiling. "He said, 'It's not that, it's not that.'

"I said I'm not here to take Chad's spot or replace him. Those two guys had great rapport. I'm not going to promise him I can throw him 90 balls. 'Whatever you had with Chad, may that continue.' We're in this together, and I'd like to come out of it together."

**Figure 4.15: *New York Times*, August 14, 2008, Sports (D10)**

This particular article excerpt highlighted a unique situation with Laveranues Coles, a wide receiver for the Jets, and favorite target (not to mention best friend) of quarterback Chad Pennington, who was traded to the Miami Dolphins to make room for Favre on the Jets' roster. Coles was so upset by the situation that he refused to speak with the media on the topic and kept his distance from Favre. Favre did what he could to initiate a relationship with Coles, though the wake of destruction left by the entire saga wore on many of his Jets teammates. For Favre, who enjoyed close friendships with teammates and locker room camaraderie during his time with the Packers, this was another big adjustment, albeit one that didn't receive much attention in the *Times* coverage.

While the analysis protocol for the *New York Times* sample articles was the same as for the *Press Gazette* stories, it is important to note the smaller total number of stories in the *Times* (45 total). Had a few stories here and there been structured differently, the most common frames could have turned out differently.



## ***USA Today***

“Moving forward” was the most popular frame used to structure *USA Today*’s sample articles on Favre, observed in 20% of stories.



**Figure 4.16: *USA Today*, July 29, 2008, Sports (1C); Jarrett Bell**

This excerpt was from a typical article that embodied the “Moving forward” focus of many other *USA Today* stories. Again, the moving forward frame included the numerous options for Favre and the Packers and speculation on how the drama would play out after Favre was determined to return to the Green Bay Packers in a playing capacity. The outcome of the Favre situation was nationally significant, and despite the lack of closure on the situation at the time, there was still a need to update the situation in the news media.

One of the second most common frames (utilized in 16% of the sample) used in the *USA Today* sample articles on Favre was “Favre as a reference point for others.” This frame encompassed people not normally associated with Favre or the NFL using Favre’s well-known situation to help an audience understand their own circumstances. Dale Jarrett (NASCAR), Steve McNair (NFL), Bill and Hillary Clinton, and Rusty Wallace (NASCAR) sympathized with or acted like Favre in one way or



another, despite the apparent lack of similarity between Favre's situation and car racing or politics.

### **Rusty Wallace says he's not about to make comeback**

"I love Kenny to death - he's been trying to get me back in a car ever since I retired after 2005," Rusty Wallace said in a statement issued through his son, Greg. "While any rumors like this are certainly flattering, they're untrue. I have a long-term commitment to ABC and ESPN and I really love what I'm doing right now."

In his blog, Kenny Wallace wrote: "He's considering this huge move because he watched Brett Favre come out of retirement in the NFL and his good friend Mark Martin is giving it another shot next year at Hendrick," Kenny Wallace wrote in the Tuesday night post.

**Figure 4.17: USA Today, October 2, 2008, Sports (13C), no author listed**

In the above excerpt, Favre's return to the NFL was cited as a reason for Rusty Wallace to come out of retirement and rejoin the NASCAR circuit. (Wallace ultimately remained retired).

However, sports articles were not the only hiding place for Favre references.

### **Clintons remain Denver focus**

The Clintons still matter, certainly, but one key question is how much? And another: What do they want?

"Sometimes dealing with the Clintons is like dealing with Brett Favre," says Leon Panetta, Clinton's former White House chief of staff, referring to the Green Bay football legend whose on-again, off-again decision on whether to retire was a big story this summer.

"They're very good players and they've got a great record, but sometimes you're not sure what they really want."

**Figure 4.18: USA Today, August 28, 2008, News (1A), Susan Page**

This political reference, likening the Clinton's to Brett Favre in their collective moments of indecision, was both relevant and surprising. Clearly, knowledge about Favre's situation reached well beyond the sports arena. There is a chance that Favre may forever be a go-to reference for people trying to convey indecision, as he clearly was in this example.

The “Judgment” frame was also used in 16% of *USA Today* stories. This frame offered opinions and criticisms on the Favre situation, sometimes placing blame on Favre and/or the Packers, and other times expressing approval of Favre’s decision to return to the NFL.

## The flip side of Brett Favre's flip-flop

Updated 7/16/2008 12:39 AM | Comments 12 | Recommend

The “flip-flop” isn’t necessarily a character flaw.

Changing one’s mind gets a bad rap sometimes because we’ve become conditioned into believing that it reflects internal weakness. Staying the course — even if it’s the wrong course — somehow echoes a sturdiness of character, even though the path potentially leads toward the edge of a cliff.

Brett Favre is now officially a self-absorbed diva, transforming in a matter of days from the Contented Warrior to the Conflicted Egotist.

But he’s only guilty of career uncertainty. If that’s a crime of depleted integrity, then we’ll all stand convicted at some point in our lives.

**Figure 4.19: *USA Today*, July 16, 2008, Sports (3C); Drew Sharp**

The judgment made in this excerpt, for example, was that Favre has every right to change his mind and would likely be welcomed back by the Packers for the 2008-2009 season. As we know, however, this turned out to be incorrect.

The “Celebration/remembrance of Favre” frame was used in 12% of articles, as was the “Divorce” frame. The “Celebration/remembrance” story structure put Favre on a pedestal, marveled at his numerous accomplishments, recounted his greatest games, and praised his seemingly superhuman abilities on the field. These tributes came even after a dismal, disappointing end to his single season with the Jets.

## **Favre's farewell 'real deal' this time**

Second retirement for good, QB insists

By Larry Weisman  
USA TODAY

"Is this the real deal? It is. Believe me," the NFL's most prolific passer said Wednesday night in a conference call confirming his decision to leave the New York Jets after one year and the NFL after 18 seasons. "It's time."

Favre is the NFL's career leader in touchdown passes (464), passing yards (65,127) and interceptions (310), and he and Peyton Manning are the league's only three-time MVPs. Favre started a record 269 consecutive games (291 including playoffs), went to two Super Bowls and won one with Green Bay in January 1997.

**Figure 4.20: *USA Today*, February 12, 2009, Sports (1C)**

An example of a standard celebratory article, this excerpt outlined Favre's second (and he claimed, final) retirement. It included his many records and accolades, and his plans for the future, which entailed doing "nothing."

The "Divorce" frame offered one of a few different ways to structure articles about Favre joining the Jets. While some sample articles honed in on his "Remarriage" to the new team, it was more common that his split from the Packers was the focus of the *USA Today* articles.

## **No joy in Favre-ville**

0 Comments | [USA TODAY, August, 2008](#) | by [Skip Wood](#)

GREEN BAY, Wis. -- Brett Favre hugged a few friends on the tarmac early Wednesday afternoon at Austin Straubel Airport, walked up the steps into the small chartered jet waiting to take him to his home outside Hattiesburg, Miss., and about 10 minutes later was in the sky -- heading far away from the place where he became an NFL icon.

"Don't get on the plane, Brett," one of a couple of dozen fans beseeched him outside a chain-link fence about 20 yards from the scene.

But because he did, in fact, get on the plane, one of the NFL's more endearing relationships between a franchise and a player was brought to a close. The fans slowly scattered, some still gazing at the sky, hit with the sudden finality that Favre truly was gone.

**Figure 4.21: *USA Today*, August 7, 2008; Sports (12C); Skip Wood**

The above excerpt was a typical example of an article framed by "Divorce," focusing on the improbable and ugly break up between Favre and the team he had anchored for sixteen years. Sports players and their teams part ways every season, for a variety of reasons. However, the bond between Favre and the Packers wasn't an everyday association—it was an almost two decade long affair, and this qualified

it as a *relationship*, not just a contractual agreement. Favre's departure truly was divorce-like in many of its characteristics.

These five frames (Moving forward, Favre as a reference point for others, Judgment, Celebration/remembrance of Favre, and Divorce) were used in over three-quarters (76%, or 19 articles) of the *USA Today* stories on Favre. However, the small number of overall articles suggested that the most common frames could have easily turned out differently had a few stories been added or omitted from the sample. Despite this, it is important to note that the *Green Bay Press Gazette* and the *New York Times* coverage was more diverse than *USA Today* as far as using unique frames. *USA Today* used the smallest number of frames and did not utilize any frames besides those also observed in the coverage of the other two publications, suggesting that *USA Today* told the most salient parts of the Favre storyline in its coverage, but nothing further.

### ***Collective Thoughts on Frames in All Three Publications***

Taken as a whole, the articles from each of the three newspapers did show some patterns. All three publications used "Moving forward" in their top five frames, offering their takes on options for Favre and the Packers, as well as informed guesses as to what direction the situation might take towards a resolution. The nature of the Favre storyline made this an obvious choice, as immense interest about Favre and his future plans was generated, both before and after his first retirement.

However, there were far fewer stories published in both the *New York Times* and *USA Today* than in the *Press Gazette* using this frame. This was understandable,

as the *Press Gazette* was Favre's hometown newspaper at the time. Also, the *GBPG's* audience members, an overwhelming number of whom were Packer fans, had a vested interest in the situation. "Moving forward" was a common way to frame *Press Gazette* articles since speculation on potential teams for Favre, the management's decisions on the situation, and other angles offered ways the situation could be meaningfully discussed during a very uncertain time for Favre and the Packers.

The *Green Bay Press Gazette* used the "Celebration/remembrance" frame often as well. Obviously Favre's retirement from the Green Bay Packers, and even his departure from Green Bay to play for the New York Jets, was cause to honor Favre locally. Favre and his career were celebrated in the *Press Gazette* throughout his first retirement and his tenure with the Jets.

*USA Today* and the *New York Times* used the "Celebration/remembrance" frame as well, but only in a handful of stories. However, because of the small number of total stories published by *USA Today*, this frame ended up as one of its more popular ones. *USA Today* published celebratory stories after each of Favre's two retirements. The *New York Times* followed suit, but also published a celebratory story in the middle of Favre's season with the Jets. This was understandable, and could be at least partially explained by the fact that the *Times* became Favre's hometown newspaper for that season.

The "Judgment" frame was popularly utilized by the *Press Gazette* and *USA Today*, but did not show much popularity with the *Times*. This was likely because most judgments on Favre were contained within the "Remarriage/Brett the Jet"

frame. This frame covered Favre's performance for the Jets (which was often negatively critiqued, especially in the second half of Favre's season with the Jets), reactions to Favre's new home in New York, and other important milestones Favre had with the Jets. A more complete picture of frame use might have resulted if the "Remarriage/Brett the Jet" frame had been more specifically broken down.

*Press Gazette* articles using the judgment frame were plentifully published throughout the entire sample period. As Favre's original hometown paper, the *Press Gazette* had a vested interest in anything Packers-related, and judgments about the Favre situation were inevitable. From his first tearful press conference, to his rumored return, and the physical fatigue that led to his second retirement, *Press Gazette* columnists, as well as coaches, fans and others were quick to offer their take on the correctness of Favre's decisions. However, the tone of these articles was mostly neutral or negative, sprinkled with few positive stories paired with this frame.

Interestingly, only three *New York Times* sample articles used the judgment frame, and none of these articles was published during Favre's season with the Jets. In fact, each of the articles was run during the uncertain time when Favre and the Packers clashed over his desire to return to the NFL. Perhaps, the judgments of its authors were not generally considered nationally relevant news and the *Times* focused on the concrete facts of the situation, publishing most stories when real information was available. However, as an elite paper, it was surprising that more opinions were not offered while Favre anchored the Jets.

The frame “Favre as a reference point for others” was the second most common frame in both the *New York Times* and *USA Today* but was not observed in any *Green Bay Press Gazette* sample articles. The near-universal relevance of the Favre story probably contributed to the use of this frame in both national publications. The stories in which Favre was referenced were generally not football-related, but were included in the sample because they suggested evidence of Favre’s widespread popularity and the significant impact his first retirement had on national media stories. Many other well-known athletes commiserated with Favre’s tearful press conference, suggesting the difficulty and sadness of retirement felt by professional athletes in other sports as well.

Both the *Green Bay Press Gazette* and the *New York Times* focused on “Mass media coverage of Favre” in many stories, only serving to emphasize the intense coverage that accompanied Favre’s every move, especially after he expressed his desire to return to the NFL in June 2008. It was somewhat surprising that the *Times* focused on this aspect of the Favre saga while *USA Today* did not. However, over half of the stories with the “Mass media” frame were published after Favre’s trade to the Jets; perhaps the attention garnered by Favre in New York was extensive enough to call attention to it.

While the “Remarriage” and “Divorce” frames were used by the *Press Gazette* (though these were not very popular in the publication’s coverage), the *New York Times* used the “Remarriage” frame most often in its coverage, while *USA Today* focused on “Divorce” in a majority of its stories. This made sense, since the *Times* became Favre’s hometown paper when he joined the Jets and this was clearly the

dominant storyline once Broadway Brett arrived in the Big Apple. As a more popular, broad-based publication, it was also not surprising that *USA Today* focused on the divorce between Favre and the Packers, playing to the likely expectations of its broader audience.

Finally, the frame “Favre vs. Rodgers—Comparisons and Competition,” was popularly utilized in the *Green Bay Press Gazette* sample articles. These comparisons were relevant across the timeline of the story, as they were made after Favre’s first retirement, during the time that he wanted to return to Green Bay, and after he was overlooked in favor of Rodgers at the starting quarterback position; therefore, this may have seemed an obvious way to structure articles. This frame did not have much relevance for the two national publications, as Rodgers was not well known outside the confines of Packer fans and was relatively unproven before he was officially given the starting quarterback position.

## **Themes**

While numerous frames conveyed the Favre story, even more themes characterized the articles about Favre. According to Altheide (1996), frames and themes are related but separate entities. He refers to themes as “the recurring, typical theses that run through a lot of the reports,” (p. 31). The selection of a particular frame for a story can then make a chosen theme more appropriate.

For example, in this study, the “Judgment” frame was popularly used to structure articles about Favre. Within this frame, themes observed in the sample stories included “Favre is wrong and/or the Packers are right,” as well as, “Favre should stay retired,” and “Packers didn’t do enough to keep Favre from retirement.”



These themes were not appropriate with the “Celebration/remembrance” frame, however.

### ***Green Bay Press Gazette***

The most popular themes in the *Press Gazette* coverage were “Uncertain future for Favre” and “Mixed feelings about Favre situation;” each was used in 6% of all stories about Favre during the sample’s time period. To put this in perspective, there were 67 different themes used by the *Press Gazette* during the sample period. A complete list of themes used is included in the coding scheme in Appendix A.

Favre’s questionable future was obviously a huge topic of discussion, since much of the 2008 summer newspaper coverage was dominated by questions about what the Packers and Favre would work out in light of his desire to return to the NFL. This theme encompassed talk of his reinstatement and release, trade options, his attendance at Packer training camp, and any other topics that were forced into an indefinite limbo by Favre’s change of heart about retirement.

## **Favre story cools from boil**

Team has nothing to add a day after report QB has ‘itch’ to return

BY ROB DEMOVSKI  
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Though the talk of a possible return by Brett Favre continued to dominate the sports landscape on Thursday, the Green Bay Packers haven’t changed their response to Wednesday’s revelation Favre may want to unretire.

The three main figures in the Packers’ organization — President and CEO Mark Murphy, General Manager Ted Thompson and coach Mike McCarthy — were out of the office on Thursday and unavailable for comment. A team spokesman said the club had no additional comment on the story. On Wednesday, the team’s response was only



### **More, C-6**

**Mike Lopresti:**  
You’re Aaron Rodgers and your time is now. Unless it isn’t.

work sometime in the next week or two. Most NFL executives and coaches typically take vacation during the early part of July because it is one of the few down

that “the Packers have no reaction.”

It was unclear whether Thompson or McCarthy, the main conduits between the team and Favre, will comment upon their return to

work sometime in the next week or two. Most NFL executives and coaches typically take vacation during the early part of July because it is one of the few down

times in the league.

For several months, sources indicated to the Press-Gazette that Favre had been having second thoughts about retiring, but it had been unknown whether Favre might try to come back. Wednesday’s story, which was first reported by ESPN, revealed that some time in the last couple of weeks, Favre called McCarthy and expressed a desire to play for the Packers in 2008.

All indications are the organization would rather see Favre stay retired. It’s unknown whether Favre would force the issue by reporting to training camp. At that point, the Packers would have to add him to their roster, cut him or trade him.

**Figure 4.22: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, July 4, 2008, Sports (1C)**

Though the Packers did not add any comments upon hearing that Favre wanted to possibly return to the NFL, there was plenty of speculation in the

newspaper coverage. The above excerpt was structured using the “Rumored return” frame, not one of the most popular used by the *Press Gazette*. However, so much uncertainty surrounded the Favre storyline during this roughly one-year period, it was not surprising that many different frames were matched up with this theme to create coverage of the story.

## Family, friends speculate about Favre’s life after the NFL

Press Gazette

“Nothing lasts forever” and “All good things come to an end” are clichés because of those statements’ inherent truth.

So it is with Brett Favre and the Green Bay Packers.

The NFL’s modern Iron Man couldn’t play quarterback forever, but now that the sure-fire Pro Football Hall of Fame signal caller has hung up his cleats, what lies ahead?

Bonita Favre, his mother, admitted in recent years she didn’t know what her famous, football-playing son would do once his illustrious career was finished. But she had a pretty good idea what he wouldn’t be doing.

Might he become an NFL analyst for one of the TV networks?

“They’d have to change the dress code,” Bonita said.

person can do before they get bored with it.” Perhaps, he would coach football like his father, Irvin, did for so many years.

“I don’t think he’d be as hardnosed (as Irvin),” she said. “Even with the younger guys on the team, the way he handled his leadership role, it was never, ‘Do as I say or hit the highway.’ He might like to coach at the high school level, because he wouldn’t have to travel, but even that might be a distraction for his players, and he wouldn’t want that.”

So, what is Brett Lorenzo Favre to do?

“I think he’s going to have a great life,” said David Thomason, his pilot and friend. “I think he’s going to stay active, but it will be a mixture of things. It’ll be between golf, hunting and spending a lot of time working on his property. He’s going to get involved more with Brittany ... and with Breleigh’s activities. I see him doing a few celebrity

➤ See Future, C-11

**Figure 4.23: Green Bay Press Gazette, March 3, 2009, Special Favre Section (pp. 10-11)**

As this excerpt demonstrated, even directly after his first retirement, uncertainty surrounded Favre’s future plans. His mother, Bonita Favre, suggested that no one really knew what her son would do following the end one of the most storied careers in the NFL. This popular theme was paired with the most common *Press Gazette* frame, “Moving forward” here, making it a fairly prototypical example of this publication’s coverage of Favre.

The theme “Mixed feelings about the Favre situation/mixed reactions” was also used generously in the *Press Gazette* stories on Favre, observed in 6% of the sample articles. This theme encompassed reactions to many of the important events in the Favre storyline, including his two retirements, his desire to return to the NFL,

his trade to the Jets, and his implosion during the final weeks of his tenure with the Jets. This was exemplified by the article “Murphy, Team Will Miss Favre” (Figure 4.2), as it was paired with the common frame, “Moving forward,” in which team president Murphy noted both sadness and gratitude regarding Favre’s first retirement announcement. Many other articles used this theme as well, especially during the time when Favre wanted to return to Green Bay after his first retirement.



Figure 4.24: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, August 7, 2008, News (A2)

As this excerpt (and other sample articles) showed, fans were quoted both in favor of and in opposition of Favre’s trade to the Jets; the “Judgment” frame was used in this article. Many of the stories at this time presented balanced judgments, providing support for and speaking out against Favre and/or the Packers in different cases. Fans were often used as sources, as they were here.

The next most common theme in the *Green Bay Press Gazette* coverage of the Favre story was “Drama follows Favre, often overblown by media,” used in 4.7% of *GBPG* articles. This theme was especially evident during the summer of 2008, when

little or no news still translated to hours of TV reports and thousands of words in print on the topic. Coverage included incidents like the tampering charges the Packers filed against the Vikings for possibly contacting Favre (a violation of the NFL's policy on such matters) to play for Minnesota, among other facets of the saga.

## Fans, media take up Favre watch

BY ANDY NELESEN

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ASHWAUBENON — A throng of reporters set up shop outside Brett Favre's Ashwaubenon home on Tuesday, staking out the three-time MVP during his ongoing efforts to re-join the NFL.



ferret out the latest news.

Courtney Bander, 30, of Appleton, was on his way to his mother's house after watching training camp when he stumbled on Favre Watch. "I saw all of this and stopped," said Bander, who wore his white No. 4 jersey for the day. "I wish the situation was different. I wish it

Figure 4.25: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, August 6, 2008, News (A2)

This excerpt was an excellent example of excessive coverage of little or no story. The article noted that fans and reporters kept vigil outside Favre's Green Bay home after Favre returned to Green Bay in an attempt to reclaim his starting job. They watched diligently as head coach Mike McCarthy and Packers' President Mark Murphy left the home. Favre's agent, Bus Cook, was spotted once, and Favre friend Frank Winters also visited. Besides the mention of these guests, there was little other substance to the story.

Despite the obvious reverence for Favre as demonstrated by the sheer volume of articles and immeasurable interest in his story, this particular period in the drama clearly outlined the religious, ritualistic undertones in the storyline. It can be argued that, this is an example of what Novak (1994) called 'sacred time'. He noted, "Sacred time is sacred because it stores up possibilities of the heroic; so long as sacred time exists, the heroic is in incubation. Sacred time teaches humans never

to quit, to count upon and entrust themselves to the potencies of life, redemption, and beauty. One never knows," (p. 127). This line of thinking could easily apply to the Favre situation; at the time of this article, no one knew how the saga would be resolved. However, the faithful were determined to show their unwavering support for Favre.

This obsession with Favre's every move was also a nod to the popularity of the next theme, "Favre has serious marketing and revenue pull." Besides generating excessive media coverage, news on Favre's rumored return, likely trade, or his desired release was likely to affect merchandise sales, ticket sales, and TV schedules, among numerous other influences of his celebrity. The large-scale effects of Favre's every move were discussed at length in numerous articles.

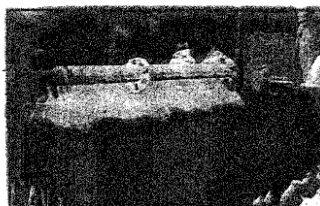
# Favre merchandise set to be big seller for Jets

## Former Packers QB moves to league's largest market

BY RICHARD RYMAN  
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Brett Favre is an economic engine and the National Football League is glad to have him back.

"It's good for football to have one of its iconic players continuing on the field," said Brian McCarthy, an



**More jersey photos online**

Click on this story at [www.PackersNews.com](http://www.PackersNews.com) for more photos of Brett Favre New York Jets replica jerseys produced Thursday.

Figure 4.26: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, August 8, 2008, Business (B1-2)

Regardless of where Favre played football, his popularity remained high. This particular article noted that Favre's new position with the New York Jets would be a big moneymaker in the marketing realm (possibly helping to sell season tickets to pay for the new Jets stadium, among other things). His revived career was

purported to have a ripple effect for memorabilia and merchandise sales across the entire NFL market and affect coverage of Jets games that season, among other influences of Favre's widespread fame.

Not all articles had such an orthodox message about Favre's revenue effects, however.

## Dealers flood eBay with Favre items

Items range from the usual to unusual

BY NATHAN PHELPS

Boy, the things with Brett Favre's face on it.

And there was a lot of it being listed for sale on the Internet's most familiar auction site Tuesday morning.

In a one-hour window from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., there were 253 "newly" listed items on eBay related to Brett Favre.

A few enterprising sellers pointed out somewhere in the listing that Favre was "retired" or "retiring."

Another 50 or so items showed up as new listings in about 10 minutes.

There's the typical stuff:

But there's other stuff, too.

"RARE BRETT FAVRE MVP CANDY BAR"

Here's the description from the seller: "This was made and sold in the mid '90s during the Green Bay Packers Super Bowl runs. This item is sealed in its original packaging. Not recommended (sic) for eating (sic) due to its age."

The list goes on. A Brett Favre 4 President T-shirt (\$12.49 Buy It Now, listed at 11:27 a.m.).

A fishing lure. Yeah, a fishing lure.

"Designed to please that discriminating NFL fan whether a pike, bass, muskie or a very fanatical sucker. While this

### RARE BRETT FAVRE MVP CANDY BAR

"This was made and sold in the mid '90s during the Green Bay Packers Super Bowl runs. This item is sealed in its original packaging. Not recommended (sic) for eating (sic) due to its age."

es fish. It is effective on bass, pike, musky/muskie, trout, coho salmon, stripers, walleye, and many others."

According to the listing, the lure is made in Wisconsin. It carried an opening bid of \$6.95.

Sports Illustrated was a popular item as well, especially

prices well above the newsstand price.

"This is a must have as Brett has just announced his retirement. This will soon be the hardest to find! This one is part of the 1st printing, not many of those left!"

The list continues to grow. From a seller in Lakeville, Minn.: "You are bidding on a ticket stub to Brett Favre's last game — the NFC

Championship game at Lambeau against the New York Giants. Priceless memory for any Packer fan!" Asking price: \$5.

By Tuesday evening, the Green Bay Press-Gazette EXTRA edition was going for \$19.99, and this edition no doubt will be listed for sale shortly.

Figure 4.27: Green Bay Press Gazette, March 5, 2008; Special Favre Section (p. 8)

According to this article, eBay was overwhelmed with Favre memorabilia immediately following his first retirement, ranging from autographed jerseys to a questionable candy bar commemorating one of Favre's 3 Most Valuable Player awards. No doubt enterprising online sellers around the globe were trying to cash in on the retirement of one of the NFL's most famous players.

The fifth most common theme observed in *Press Gazette* coverage was "Individuals, fans pay tribute to Favre," used in 4.2% of the articles. An entire young generation of Packer faithful knew Favre as the only Packer quarterback in their lifetime, and older fans recalled Favre as a "messiah" figure who restored the glory

to Titledown. Former teammates, coaches, management, and opponents also paid tribute to Favre in the sample articles.

# GM Wolf believed in Favre from beginning

## Game against Atlanta helped cement the trade

BY ROB DEMOVSKY  
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That famous story Bob Harlan has told for years — the one about Ron Wolf, in his first action as the Green Bay Packers' general manager in 1991, cementing his decision to trade for Brett Favre after seeing him throw in a pregame warmup — never happened.

Wolf revealed on Tuesday, shortly after Favre announced his retirement after 17 NFL seasons and 16 as the Packers' starting quarterback, that he never saw Favre throw a pass on that day.

The story, as Harlan retold on Tuesday, goes like this: Harlan hired Wolf on Nov. 27, 1991. Four days later, the Packers played the Atlanta Falcons, where Favre was in his first season as a backup.

"I'm up in the press box and

**"He always played with a lot of passion, and if you don't have that passion anymore, then you better do what he did, and that's to hang it up."**

— Former Packers General Manager Ron Wolf

authority to run this football operation, and I'm not about to interfere with your very first decision."

Harlan, the retired team president, has been conveying that story for years, but only Tuesday did it become known that Wolf never got the chance to double check Favre's arm strength.

"I was told by a member of the Atlanta staff (before the game) that if I wanted to see Brett Favre

draft pick, Wolf considered it a steal because he believed Favre was "the best player available in the 1991 draft."

"My belief was in order to be successful in the National Football League, you have to have a quarterback," Wolf said. "If you didn't have a quarterback, it'd be difficult to win. When we were able to get Brett Favre, I was of the opinion we had a quarterback. That's one thing that's been borne out. He was more than a quarterback. When you think about his career with the Green Bay Packers, for him to be compared to the great players ever to play for the Green Bay Packers and for him to be now said to be the greatest player every to play, he's in rare company. That's a great credit to him."

Wolf got word of Favre's retirement early Tuesday morning from

Figure 4.28: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, March 5, 2008, Special Favre Section (p. 6)

In the above excerpt, former Packers General Manager Ron Wolf recalled the early days of Favre's career, long before Favre was considered anything but a slacker in the NFL. Wolf saw something special in Favre, and as a result, the rest of the sports world had the chance appreciate the player Favre became. This article, not surprisingly, demonstrated the "Celebration/remembrance" frame.

This is another indication that Favre's retirement was not an ordinary event, and that Favre was not an ordinary athlete. These types of heartfelt remembrances are most often observed in eulogies. So sweeping was the extent of the praise resulting from Favre's first retirement it prompted him to note, "I realized what it's like to die" (Walter, 2008). This was just another indication of the religious following that had assembled during Favre's tenure with the Packers.

Interestingly, all but one of the nine stories that used the “Tribute” theme were published in the week following Favre’s first retirement.

## Man in the middle

Humble Winters  
centers attention  
on team success

BY MIKE VANDERMAUSE  
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**On his relationship with Favre:** “It was special. We became really good buddies from the get-go. He came in from Mississippi the same year I came in from the Chiefs. We just kind of hit it off. We had a lot of fun. He was a good guy. We were roommates for 11 years, it was a good time. It was a friendship that I knew would go beyond football when our careers ended. Deep down, he’s a good guy, he does a lot for a lot of people. It’s great to say I know this guy, the guy I played with for so many years. We can say we’re still friends, even after football is over with.”

Figure 4.29: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, July 18, 2008, Sports (C1,3)

This excerpt was from the sole *Press Gazette* article that paid tribute to Favre *after* he came out of retirement. His friend and former teammate, Frank Winters, recounts the good times he and Favre shared while playing for the Packers. Winters did not focus on Favre’s accolades on the field, but instead highlighted the kind of person Favre was and the friendship he and Favre still shared.

Two themes were tied in the sixth most popular position in the *Press Gazette*. “Rodgers can do it, give him a chance,” was one of these and was observed in 3.7% of the Favre articles. This frame showed hometown support for Aaron Rodgers, the new leader of the Packer offense. Many fans were openly frustrated that the Packers were not unconditionally welcoming Favre back to the organization, and Rodgers was the subject of much criticism during this time. However, as this theme suggested, he found some support.



# Rodgers/Road hasn't been easy

► From C-1

"He's not going to have the (drug) addiction problems or any of that stuff. He doesn't have those because he doesn't do that stuff. Brett was just wilder, just like he plays."

To be sure, Rodgers isn't a hermit. On a given day, he can be found in a local restaurant enjoying a meal with a teammate or at Green Bay Country Club (which he recently joined) playing golf with friends. However, he's just as likely to be at his house, which he shares with one of the Packers' assistant trainers, playing his guitar or reading.

Different as they may be, Rodgers will be compared to Favre in every way, including his life off the field.

"I'm a very personal, private person by nature," Rodgers said. "I value my relationships and the exclusivity of those relationships from the public, so I definitely want to keep things that don't need to be public matters private. Different

always has been, but it's kind of epitomized my career. I've taken the road that not a lot of guys have taken, and I wouldn't change it. It's made me such a better person, player. It hasn't been easy, and I don't want any sympathy, but I think it's made me a better person and a better player because I've been able to go through things that have been put in front of me."

The road got rockier this offseason when Favre changed his mind about retirement. As if things weren't going to be tough enough on Rodgers, being in the unenviable position of replacing a legend, he has to deal with the additional pressure that came when the Packers jettisoned Favre to go with him.

"I knew it was going to be difficult already without anything else that would have happened," Rodgers said. "In March (when Favre retired), I knew it was going to be a tough year, only because Brett was coming off one of his best years.

very humble and very smart."

If Rodgers couldn't see it at the time, he realizes the error of his ways.

"That's probably the most disappointing time in my career as I look back on it," Rodgers said. "I don't like making excuses for myself, but I feel like the whole draft process makes you have to sell yourself constantly, and I got in that mode I think of constantly selling myself to people that I got away from my true nature of just trying to be humble, deflecting credit and keeping my mouth shut. I'm disappointed in that part of my life, but I can now look back and realize the mistakes that I've made."

From here, Rodgers' actions on the field will be far more important than his life off it.

Predictions about his chances for success are all over the map, but most agree he's in a better position to succeed than he would have been thrust into action right away, like

seasons.

"I think Aaron has made great progress, and when he's gotten a chance to play, he's played well, played particularly well in that game against Dallas (last season)," Turner said. "I think it's the way to go."

Houston, Texans' coach, Gary Kubiak, who was the Denver Broncos' offensive coordinator during part of the John Elway era, agreed.

"I think it's going to benefit Rodgers tremendously to have been able to watch and learn behind Favre for three seasons," Kubiak said this offseason. "In this salary-cap era, you usually don't have that luxury anymore."

Noted quarterback expert Ron Jaworski, the former Philadelphia Eagles starter who will call Monday night's game on ESPN, has followed Rodgers' career closely and has seen him make considerable strides.

"I was not a big fan of Aaron Rodgers," Jaworski said during a conference call this week. "I did not see

Figure 4.30: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, September 7, 2008, Sports (C1); Rob Demovsky

This excerpt quoted former coaches of Rodgers and NFL experts, all of whom agreed that Rodgers gave the Packers a good chance to win, despite the difficulties posed by stepping into the shoes of a legendary quarterback. The circumstances of Rodgers' take-over of the Packers also made the upcoming season more challenging than it otherwise would have been, but this article pointed out Rodgers' athletic and mental strengths that pointed towards a relatively smooth transition. This article was framed as "Favre vs. Rodgers—Comparisons and competition," one of the most popular frames used by the *Press Gazette*, making it a fairly typical story for this publication.

The theme "Favre returns to Green Bay; quarterback competition likely," received just as much ink as the previous theme, making Rodgers somewhat of an innocent victim caught up in the coverage of Favre's return. Excitement over the prospect of Favre's homecoming was apparent, and talk of a skills competition for

the privilege to lead the Packers was widely discussed, without many expressing confidence that Rodgers could outduel Favre.

## Team changes plans, QB spot could be up for grabs

BY PETE DOUGHERTY  
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If all goes well in coach Mike McCarthy's meeting with Brett Favre, the competition can begin. Favre arrived in Green Bay on Sunday night ready to play football, and the Green Bay Packers appear open to changing course and holding a competition between him and Aaron Rodgers for their starting quarterback job, a source close to Favre said Sunday.

McCarthy said he talked to Favre on the phone Sunday but will wait until meeting face to face with the quarterback today before making a decision about an open competition. McCarthy at least suggested that after Favre's wavering for most of the offseason about whether to return from retirement, he's waiting for Favre to tell him in person he's 100 percent committed to football before an-



Rick and Bev Neumeier of Gresham show their support for Brett Favre while waiting for him to arrive Sunday night at the Executive Air terminal at Austin Straubel International Airport.

Photo galleries online

Figure 4.31: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, August 4, 2008, News (A1-2)

This excerpt and the rest of the article suggested that upon Favre's return to Green Bay, pending a successful meeting with head coach Mike McCarthy, Favre would at least be allowed to compete for the starting position, if not given the quarterback job outright. This story also used the popular *Press Gazette* frame, "Favre vs. Rodgers," which was characteristic of the articles published during this tumultuous, uncertain time in the storyline.

The reverent theme "Favre is a great competitor, one of the best," was used in 3.3% of the *Press Gazette* stories. The NFL had produced great players before Favre, and his incredible athletic skills put him in the company of NFL legends. Favre was one of the best at what he did, and many were quick to start the countdown for Favre's eligibility into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

# Awards, statistics put Favre in rare company

BY PETE DOUGHERTY  
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Brett Favre heads into retirement as the only NFL player to win three Most Valuable Player awards.

He'll be a first-ballot Hall of Famer, set a record of consecutive starts by a quarterback that might never be matched and will go down as one of the all-time great quarterbacks in league history.

But just how great?

After winning the back-to-back MVPs from 1995 to 1997, Favre was 28 years old and appeared to have at least a shot at landing at the top of the list before he was finished. But he never again reached the height of those seasons, so the more appropriate question probably is

least these players as candidates: Montana, Johnny Unitas, Marino, Elway, Favre and Otto Graham. Other possibilities include Roger Staubach, Fran Tarkenton, Starr, Steve Young, Sammy Baugh, Len Dawson, Sid Luckman and Terry Bradshaw. Peyton Manning also probably will deserve consideration by the time he retires.

"The greatest ever, that's a tough word," said Dan Reeves, a former NFL player and coach. "There's about 10 guys — you could make an argument for each and every one of them, and I don't know that I'd want to separate any one of them. To be mentioned as one of those, that's a great statement right there."

Favre's legacy rests mainly on his three MVPs, two Super Bowl appearances, overall record (his 160 wins are the most by any

**He's sure in the top 10. I don't know who you'd put in the top 10. Montana, Marino and Elway, I guess. ... But he's a sure-shot first-ballot Hall of Famer and one of the great quarterbacks of all time.**

Bill Polian,  
general manager,  
Indianapolis Colts

played every day. Now, you look at quarterbacks in our league, how many of them get hurt every

"Those two epitomize what you're talking about," Reeves said, "because everybody knows you have to throw it and yet they've got a good enough arm and great confidence in their ability... What that does for your football team, in the fourth quarter you may be behind but (the players) say, 'Let's just keep working a little bit harder, because if we can get the ball back our offense has a chance to win this thing.' So, your defense plays harder and your offense is just dying to get back in there, because they know you've got a chance."

The most controversial part of Favre's play was his high-risk, high-reward style. Among the other quarterbacks generally considered the best ever, he probably took more chances throwing into coverage.

**Figure 4.32: Green Bay Press Gazette, March 9, 2008, Special Favre Section (p. 3)**

The above excerpt and the remainder of the article celebrated Favre's numerous achievements and attempted to compare and contrast him to other NFL quarterback greats, including Joe Montana, Dan Marino, and John Elway. The frame "Rating Favre/comparisons" was used here; it was not one of the most popular frames in the *Press Gazette's* coverage, perhaps because in the minds of many local reporters, he was unquestionably the greatest quarterback of all time.

## SI to publish issue dedicated to Favre

Press-Gazette

Sports Illustrated will publish a special edition of the magazine devoted to former Green Bay Packers quarterback Brett Favre.

About 4,000 copies of the magazine will be available, most likely Monday, said Niki Pivonka, an employee at Waldenbooks at Bay Park

Square mall in Ashwaubenon.

The magazine, dedicated to Favre, comes on the heels of his recent tearful, formal retirement announcement. Favre, 38, played 17 seasons with the National Football League, 16 with the Packers.

Waldenbooks will not take reservations. Magazines

will be sold on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Favre graced the cover of the publication as Sportsman of the Year late last year. That issue went into three printings, and brought about long lines of people.

Bosse's News & Tobacco in downtown Green Bay sold 3,100 copies of that issue.

**Figure 4.33: Green Bay Press Gazette, March 7, 2008, News (A2)**

This short article also celebrated Favre's greatness, raising awareness that *Sports Illustrated* would create an issue devoted entirely to his famed career. For a publication that covers the entire gamut of sports, this was a nearly unprecedented move. This article was structured using the popular "Celebration/remembrance of Favre" frame, one that was favored by the *Press Gazette*.

Finally, four themes were tied for the next most popular, each used in 2.8% of articles. While none of these was excessively more relevant than those that did not make the cut for the *Press Gazette*'s most popular, the thirteen different themes covered in this section did not even account for half of the *Press Gazette* articles published about Favre. This only highlighted the many different angles Favre provided for journalists to write about, both as an athlete and a person.

The theme "Mental fatigue leads to Favre's first retirement" was another popular one for the *Press Gazette*. Favre himself cited his overall exhaustion as a contributing factor in his decision to retire in March 2008. It was not surprising that this theme was often used, since it was an explanation for Favre's retirement in his own words.

## Favre retires after failing to shake mental fatigue

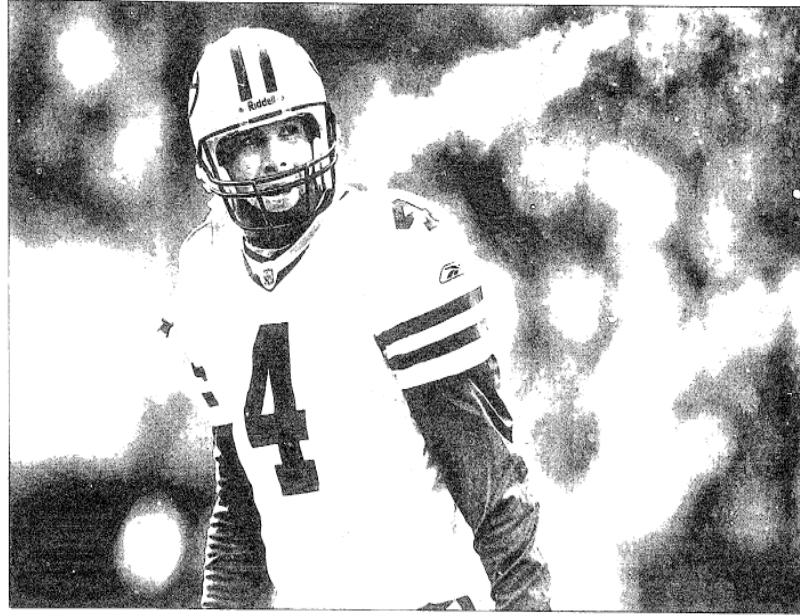
BY PETE DOUGHERTY  
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More than anything, Brett Favre wore out mentally.

After a 17-year career that will land him in the pantheon of the NFL's all-time greats, Favre couldn't find enough reasons to put himself through the rigors required to play to the standards he'd set as quarterback of the Green Bay Packers.

His landmark decision to not return for the 2008 season shocked the organization, because he was coming off one of his best seasons at age 38, when he helped lead a revived young team back to the NFC championship game.

People close to Favre, however, began suspecting he might end his football career when conversations this offseason repeatedly returned to how mentally tired he remained. To some degree, those people question whether General Manager Ted Thompson and coach Mike McCarthy could have done more to persuade



Green Bay Packers quarterback Brett Favre walks off the field after an unsuccessful series during the Dec. 23 game against the Chicago Bears at Soldier Field in Chicago. Favre says he's tired mentally after 17 seasons in the NFL. **Evan Siegle/Press-Gazette**

**Figure 4.34: Green Bay Press Gazette, March 5, 2008, Sports (C3)**

This article gave a good overview of Favre's mental state in the months after the devastating loss to the New York Giants in the NFC Championship game during his final season with the Packers. Despite much success, Favre noted that he spent more and more time studying upcoming opponents and less and less time enjoying the game and savoring wins as he once had. Other articles that used this theme also included sources like Favre's family, friends, and teammates. Most of them noted their surprise at Favre's weariness, as even his closest friends did not realize how mentally challenging the season had been for him.

Another theme used as often as "Mental fatigue" was "Packers move forward with Rodgers, despite questions of injury prone-ness and durability." Aaron Rodgers had been through a string of injuries since his arrival in Green Bay; this was often juxtaposed with Favre's Ironman streak and was cause to question the intelligence of banking on an unproven, injury prone quarterback.

# Future arrives at QB

Packers move on to Rodgers, but will transition be smooth?

BY PETE DOUGHERTY  
pdougher@greenbaypressgazette.com

Mike McCarthy and Ted Thompson, emboldened by five-year contracts, have staked their present and futures on Aaron Rodgers as the quarterback of the Green Bay Packers.

But on Saturday, McCarthy, the team's popular third-year coach, shined a little light on the Packers' stalemate with Brett Favre and his desire to end his brief retirement.



Pete Dougherty is taking a position-by-position look at the 2008 Green Bay Packers heading into training camp:

**July 21:** Defensive line

**Tuesday:** Linebackers

**Wednesday:** Defensive backs

**Thursday:** Running backs

**Friday:** Receivers/tight ends

**Saturday:** Offensive line

**Today:** Quarterbacks

**Monday:** Special teams

► Go to [www.PackersNews.com](http://www.PackersNews.com) to read previous stories in the series.

sized that over and over again on Saturday at his pre-training camp media conference.

That came through when a reporter asked McCarthy a basic but pointed question: Which quarterback, Favre or Rodgers, gives the Packers the best chance to win in 2008?

"For as simple a question as that sounds, it's obviously a lot more complicated than that," McCarthy said.

"Aaron Rodgers is our starting quarterback, and we've come to that decision because of a number of different factors. Once again, it's a great opportunity for him and I'm excited about him. I think he's prepared himself for this opportunity, and that's where we are."

So, while McCarthy and Thompson like Rodgers' talent,

Figure 4.35: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, July 27, 2008, Sports (C1,3)

This article demonstrated the unwavering support Rodgers received from the Packers, beginning immediately after Favre's first retirement. There was never a question of who would lead the Packers after the Favre era, with the exception of an uncertain few days in July 2008 when Favre briefly returned to Green Bay. For nearly the entire time that Favre's 'itch' to return the NFL dominated the news media, the Packers were steadfast in backing Rodgers, citing his intelligence, mobility, and arm strength as key factors in what they believed would be his future success. However, it was nearly impossible to discuss Rodgers without also mentioning Favre; Favre's impressive legacy may always haunt Rodgers.

Another common theme used in 2.8% of the Favre stories was "Favre is a Jet; He's excited to get started." Coverage of Favre in the *Press Gazette* continued even after the end of his tenure with the Packers. This included articles on Jets news conferences, practices, and anything else that the local Favre-faithful might be interested in.

## Favre-led Jets may rate higher here than in NYC

### Milwaukee ratings hint at numbers for Green Bay

BY WARREN GERDS  
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Brett the Jet has made a ripple in Green Bay's TV ratings.

Signs point to the New York Jets, and their new quarterback Brett Favre, having higher ratings in the Green Bay market than New York.

Locally, Green Bay Packers games still are the champ.

"Typically, a Packers game in the Green Bay

market has a 55 to 60 rating," said R. Perry Kidder, general manager of WFRV, Channel 5, which is carrying

all the Jets games it can this season by way of CBS. The numbers mean 55 percent to 60 percent of households in the market tune to the Packers.

For Sunday's Jets-Miami Dolphins game, Brett Favre's first regular-season start as a Jet, these are the Nielsen numbers:

■ **New York:** 12.6 rating, 30 share (or of sets turned on, 30 percent were tuned to



Favre

the Jets; a 70 to 80 share for Packers games is not unheard of in the Green Bay market).

■ **Miami:** 23 rating, 41 share.

■ **Green Bay:** Unknown. The closest metered market is Milwaukee, which registered a 20.9 rating and 43 share for the Jets-Dolphins game.

"Typically, if you take the Milwaukee football rating, be it the Packers or an AFC game, we deliver about a 40 or 50 percent higher number in the Green Bay market," Kidder said.

"That gives you an idea of what kind of numbers we expect that that game

### More online

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[www.greenbaypressgazette.com](http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com)

for a photo

gallery of

Brett Favre's first game with the New York Jets.



kets, New York and Miami," Kidder said.

When Favre landed in New York, WFRV asked CBS to send Jets games to this market — and the station raised its advertising rates for those games.

"As far as the revenue goes, the only thing I can say about that is that the rates, as they always do, went up with accordance to the audience," Kidder said.

The Green Bay market next will be measured in November. Last November, one AFC game on WFRV — New England-Indianapolis — drew a 22 rating and 47 share, Kidder said.

Figure 4.36: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, September 12, 2008, News (A1)

The above article noted that there could be more interest in Brett's Jets in Green Bay than New York. In fact, many Green Bay-based fans, including bar and restaurant owners, expressed just as much interest in watching Favre and the Jets as the hometown Packers during the 2008-2009 season.

Finally, the idea of Favre as a "humble, grateful NFL star" was obvious in 2.8% of the *Press Gazette* stories. Favre's humility and generosity were just a couple of the many character traits that contributed to his likeability. These qualities made him accessible to his fans, as most anyone could relate to his family devotion, passion for charity work, or childlike love of football.

## Charitable Favre gives back to community

BY SARA BOYD  
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Brett Favre is known for his contributions on the field, but what he's done off the field has bolstered the community in many ways.

In 1996, Favre started the Brett Favre Fourward Foundation, an organization that raises money to provide assistance for disadvantaged or disabled children in Wisconsin and Mississippi. His annual golf tournament for cystic fibrosis and celebrity softball game raise money for the foundation.

Here are just a few of the causes Favre and his family have contributed to:

wheelchairs.

■ **Starbright**, a program available at the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, where sick children are able to connect with other hospitalized children through a private computer network.

■ **Young Artists Workshop**, a summer arts program at St. Norbert College for youths with disabilities.

■ **Boys & Girls Club of Green Bay.**

■ **Deanna Favre's HOPE Foundation**, assistance for women who are underserved or underinsured during their battle against breast cancer.

### Mississippi charities

■ **Special Olympics.**

■ **Make-A-Wish Foundation.**

Figure 4.37: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, March 9, 2008, Special Favre Section (p. 3)

It was no secret that Favre was very grateful for his many football-related successes, and while sometimes dismayed by the amount of interest in his personal life, he was quick to use his popularity for numerous good causes. A meeting with Favre was often the object of many children's "Make a Wish" requests, as he contributed to chapters of the foundation in both Wisconsin and Mississippi. While this was not the most common type of article in the sample, it was these examples of his selflessness that made Favre such a hit with celebrities and common folks alike.

Other articles touting Favre's humility and gratefulness were displayed in the *Press Gazette* as well.

**Legislature passes resolution honoring Favre**

**Bill commends charity work, career**

BY TODD RICHMOND  
The Associated Press

MADISON — The state Legislature officially bid farewell to Brett Favre on Tuesday, passing a resolution honoring the former Green Bay Packers quarterback and the NFL's only three-time most valuable player.

The resolution honors Favre for leading the Packers to a victory in Super Bowl XXXI and breaking the league records for passing touchdowns, completions, attempts and quarterback victories.

"Brett Favre's legacy will live on beyond his many impressive records and statistics, as his leadership and love of football embody the heart of America's favorite game, earning him the respect and admiration of his fellow players, coaches and fans," the resolution said.

**Read the bill**  
Click on this story at [www.greenbaypressgazette.com](http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com) to read the text of Assembly resolution.

**More coverage online**  
Go to [www.PackersNews.com](http://www.PackersNews.com) for links to our Brett Favre tribute page and a special section on Brett Favre's retirement, including stories, photos, video, slideshows and fan comment.

tion said.

The resolution also commends Favre for his charity work through the Favre Fourward Foundation, which he set up in 1996 to help poor and disabled children in Wisconsin and Mississippi, Favre's home state. It also mentions the Deanna Favre Hope Foundation, which his wife created to help women fight breast cancer.

Both the state Assembly and Senate adopted the resolution on unanimous voice votes. Favre did not attend either proceeding.

Rep. Phil Montgomery, R-Ashwaubenon, was the resolution's chief sponsor in the Assembly. Montgomery praised Favre for getting the Packers in the playoffs repeatedly and providing an economic boom to the state. Some Republicans in the chamber applauded that remark.

Montgomery told the chamber he met Deanna Favre for the first time in 1998, when he was going door-to-door campaigning.

He came to the Favres' home, but no one answered the door. He left a brochure and was turning around to leave when he saw Deanna Favre come out to get the garbage cans.

He introduced himself as a candidate for the state Assembly, but she told him "No, thank you. I vote in Mississippi," Montgomery said, imitating her southern drawl.

The lawmaker said he met Brett Favre during a push for a referendum for public money for Lambeau Field renovations. Favre would go to high school football games and hand out leaflets about the renovations and signed autographs on "everything" people gave him, he said.

"They (the Favres) will be tremendously missed, not only in my community but throughout the state," Montgomery said.

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Figure 4.38: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, March 3, 2008, News (A2)

As this article noted, Favre's endless giving did not escape the notice of Wisconsin lawmakers. A resolution passed in the State Legislature recognized his charitable work, exceptional football skills, and important economic contributions to the entire state—not just the Green Bay area. Again, these were not the most prevalent articles detailing the Favre story line, but stories like the one above emphasized the reason to study Favre in the first place. Sports stars retire every



day—but State Legislatures, charity foundations, and statewide economic sectors do not often feel the loss right along with diehard sports fans.

### ***New York Times***

While nine popular themes used in the *Green Bay Press Gazette* did not account for even half of the articles published about Favre, just five themes structured 55% of the *New York Times* stories on Favre.

The most commonly used theme for the *New York Times* was “Uncertain future for Favre,” observed in 24% of the stories. This theme was evident throughout the yearlong sample period, and it was used to convey a variety of different topics related to Favre. Because Favre was often not forthcoming with his plans or thoughts (especially during the summer of 2008, when his return to football dominated sports media), uncertainty was often the only theme with which these stories could be accurately portrayed to an audience thirsty for Favre news.

## **Favre Asks Packers for His Release**

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Published: July 12, 2008

The 38-year-old Favre retired March 6 after a 17-year career, but almost immediately began dropping hints that he was having second thoughts.

The Packers' projected starting quarterback for next season was Aaron Rodgers, a first-round pick in 2005 who has been Favre's backup.

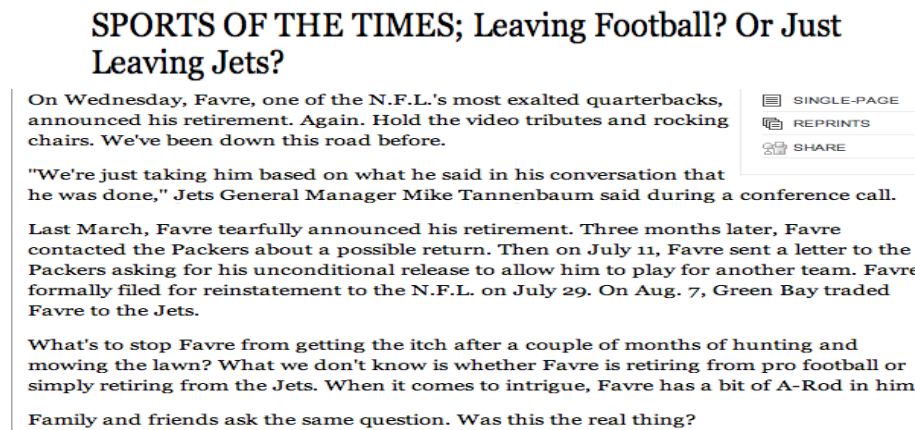
If the Packers were to trade Favre, the [Baltimore Ravens](#), the [Tampa Bay Buccaneers](#) and perhaps the [Washington Redskins](#) would be interested. There has been speculation that he could be traded to Miami for the disgruntled defensive end Jason Taylor, the 2006 defensive player of the year.

If the Packers were to release Favre, it would leave open the possibility that he would sign with the Packers' division rivals, Minnesota or Chicago, where he would appear to be an upgrade over the incumbent quarterbacks.

**Figure 4.39: *New York Times*, July 12, 2008, Sports (D3)**

From this excerpt, it was clear that not much was clear. Favre's decision to return to the NFL after his first retirement created many questions for both Favre and the Packers organization. This article used the “Moving forward” frame in

addition to the “Uncertainty” theme, a popular combination for the *New York Times*, and typical of the coverage in the other two publications as well (see Figure 4.1 & Figure 4.16).



**Figure 4.40: *New York Times*, February 12, 2009, Sports (B13)**

This article excerpt was characteristic of most written after Favre’s second retirement. Even Favre’s friends and family were not sure if this retirement was for real. Despite Favre’s repeated assertions that he was done with football, questions swirled about whether Favre could stay away from the game. As it turned out, he could not.

The second most popular theme used in the *Times* was “Favre’s play unimpressive; Favre looks old as Jets struggle,” observed in 11% of the articles. This theme was often used to characterize (and criticize) Favre’s downfall in the latter half of his season with the Jets.

## Now for the Annual Question: Will Favre Retire?

Among the debris swirling around Giants Stadium when the game ended was the final statistical line for Favre: 20 of 40 for 233 yards, with a touchdown and three interceptions.

It was part of a broader equation that added up to the fourth loss in the final five games for the Jets (9-7), who were 8-3 at Thanksgiving — a pratfall that provided a firm tug on Favre's previously unassailable legacy. He threw two touchdown passes and nine interceptions in the final five games.

"I'm sure everyone's going to say, 'He's old and washed up and gray' and all that stuff," Favre said. "Maybe they're right."

He did not sound as if he believed that. "There's no reason in my mind that I should have played any differently than I did earlier in the year," he added.

**Figure 4.41: *New York Times*, December 29, 2008, Sports (D2); John Branch**

This excerpt was from an article that was particularly hard on Favre, citing his poor play down the stretch as a reason that the Jets were unable to make the playoffs after an initially promising season. The fans were especially down on Favre, most abandoning the stands well before the end of the particular game outlined in this article. While uncertainty was definitely a salient part of the article, the major focus within the "Remarriage/Brett the Jet" frame was the fact that Favre and the Jets struggled, largely due to his erratic play.

It was not surprising that the *Times* chose to focus on Favre's shortcomings; after all, he was obtained by the Jets to win games and make a Super Bowl run. Obviously the failings of the Favre-led Jets were a big-ticket news item for Favre's new hometown newspaper. This was understandable based on the notoriously hard-nosed coverage that characterized of the *Times*.

The third most common theme was "Mention of Favre with other retirees, no judgment," structuring 6.7% of the Favre stories in the *Times*. In the wake of his retirement, Favre was often grouped together with retired NFL greats. However,

while some themes and frames explicitly implied judgment, this theme discussed Favre without offering any opinions or criticisms.

### **Strahan Decides to Stay a Retired Giant**

By JUDY BATTISTA  
Published: August 27, 2008

Strahan, in contrast to his friend Brett Favre, the Jets' new quarterback, said he did not want to go through the physical and mental rigors of another season. Strahan, 36, retired a few months after the Giants won the Super Bowl in February, after 15 seasons.

Favre, who changed his mind about retirement and was traded to the Jets from the Green Bay Packers this month, said this week that he thought the Giants should pursue Strahan. But Strahan had already slimmed down from his playing days and had devoted himself to preparing for his new television role.

**Figure 4.42: *New York Times*, August 27, 2008, Sports (D7)**

The above article contrasted Favre with Michael Strahan, the New York Giants defensive end that retired after his team beat the Packers in the 2008 NFC Championship game and won the Super Bowl. Strahan's old team wanted him back, but he ultimately decided to remain retired. While Favre's flip flop was mentioned, no judgment ensued. Interestingly, all *Times* stories using this theme also used the frame "Favre as a reference point for others." Again, because of his widespread fame and popularity, a mention of Favre often went a long way in offering insight into the situation of other sports stars, like Strahan, struggling with retirement.

The theme "Time will tell if Favre can be successful in New York; big adjustments ahead for Favre" was also used in 6.7% of the articles in the *Times*. This theme basically mused about Favre's chances at resurrecting a Jets team that had struggled in recent years. Ultimately, the reader was left to assume that the situation would just have to play out and more information would be published when the season actually started.

## SPORTS OF THE TIMES; The Hired Gun

By DAVE ANDERSON  
Published: August 8, 2008

Age, the inevitability of injury and the Jets' persistent frustration as a franchise figure to be Favre's toughest opponents.

With all due respect for Favre's ironman streak of a record 253 consecutive starts with the Packers, at 38 he's overdue for a disabling injury, especially after joining the Jets well into training camp and hurrying to get into better shape while learning a different offense and adjusting to different receivers.

For all his possible problems, Favre arrives at the top of his game, or close to it. In guiding the Packers to within an overtime reception (by the Giants) of the Super Bowl last season, he established National Football League career records for touchdown passes (442), completions (5,377) and yards (61,655).

**Figure 4.43: *New York Times*, August 8, 2008; Sports (D1)**

In this excerpt and throughout the article, though the author expressed hope that Favre could work his magic in New York as he did in Green Bay, there was significant doubt conveyed about Favre's age and how it would affect his ability to avoid serious injury. The story also compared Favre to other legendary quarterbacks who ended their careers far from the teams that made them famous. Some found success even late in their professions while others were lumped in the failure category, tarnishing their otherwise stellar careers by continuing to play long after they hit their peaks. The question left hanging at the end of the article was whether Favre, like those before him, would be judged a success—or a failure—at the conclusion of his career.

Finally, the theme "Classic Favre performance, meets expectations of Jets," was also used in 6.7% of the articles. Favre had patented plenty of moves on the field that were uniquely associated with him. His trademarks included improbable

fourth quarter comebacks, a superhuman ability to escape defenders, and boyish excitement over a touchdown.

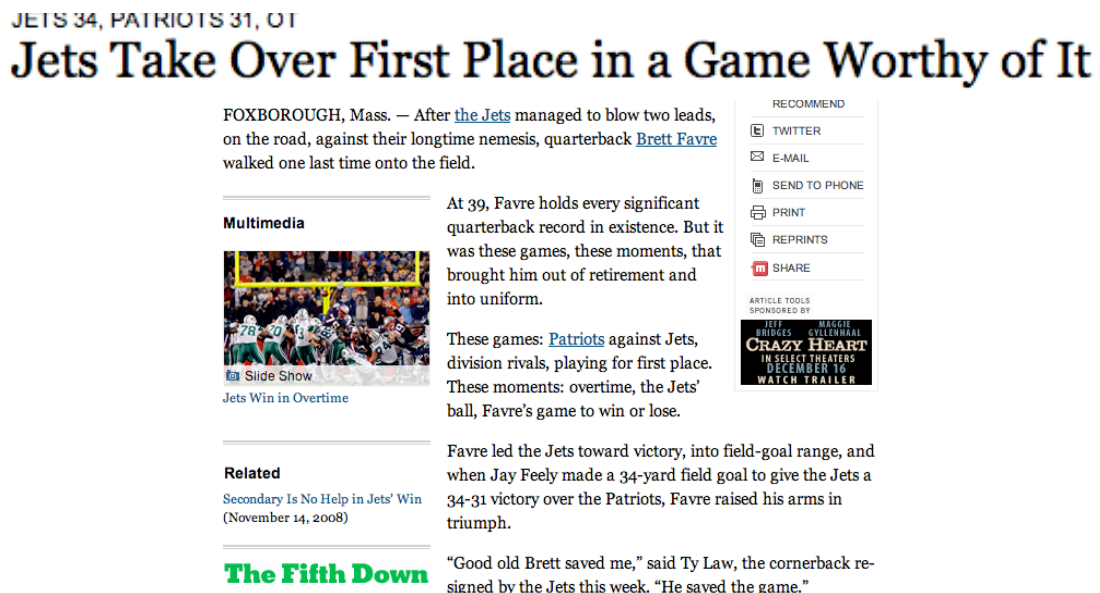


Figure 4.44: *New York Times*, November 14, 2008, Sports (B11); Greg Bishop

The classic Favre performance was exactly what the Jets were banking on when they obtained the aging quarterback, and with articles like the one above, everyone rested easy with the thought that the right decision was made. A victory over their bitter and talented division rivals, the New England Patriots, was a pretty good indicator that Favre still had some magic left.

### *USA Today*

Just as a large percentage of the *New York Times* articles were covered by relatively few themes, so was the case with *USA Today*'s coverage of the Favre story. *USA Today* used just 16 themes in its sample stories. The most popular theme observed was "Uncertain future for Favre," used in 16% of the sample stories. Again, this theme focused on the numerous questions that swirled around Favre during the time period in which it was not clear whether Favre would play football

at all, much less for the Packers. Since the only constant amidst the Favre saga was often the lack of answers, it was no wonder *USA Today* used this theme often; uncertainty was clearly newsworthy during this time.

### **Favre Tale Yields Another Surprise**

Posted on: Tuesday, 5 August 2008, 06:00 CDT

By Skip Wood

GREEN BAY, Wis. — The Brett Favre saga took yet another strange twist Monday night.

Favre, who rejoined the Green Bay Packers roster earlier in the day, met with coach Mike McCarthy at 7 p.m. ET, but the team canceled McCarthy's scheduled news conference at Lambeau Field a couple of hours later.

Team spokesman Jeff Blumb said the meeting was ongoing as of 9:45 p.m. and the news briefing was shelved until today. The Associated Press reported that Favre and McCarthy left Lambeau about 12:22 a.m. today.

Over the last month or so, general manager Ted Thompson and McCarthy have attempted to talk Favre out of returning, saying the team needed to move forward with Aaron Rodgers.

But once the NFL announced Sunday that it would process the retired quarterback's reinstatement papers, everything changed.

THE PERFECT GIFT FOR EMPLOYEES

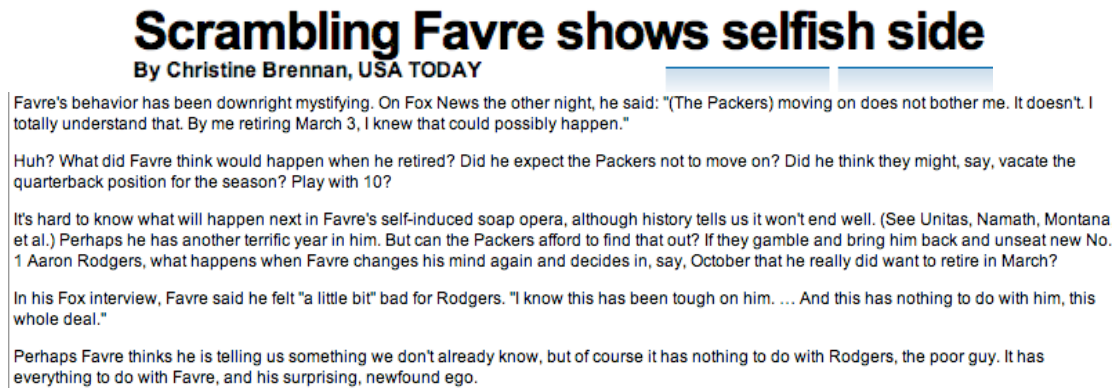
**Figure 4.45: *USA Today*, August 5, 2008, Sports (1C)**

This article was published in the midst of much confusion about the direction the Packers would take because of Favre's desire to return. At the time of this article, Favre had physically returned to Green Bay and was in discussion with the Packers regarding his future role with the team. The time for a scheduled press conference to update the press on developments between the two sides passed with no news, leaving many unanswered questions. It was interesting to note that every *USA Today* article that used the uncertainty theme was published during the roughly two week time period when Favre forced the Packer's to act by returning to Green Bay with the intention of reporting to training camp.

There were three themes tied for second most popular in *USA Today*, and they represented an extremely wide range of recurring ideas related to the storyline. On one end of the spectrum, the theme "Favre is wrong and/or Packers are right," was used in 12% of articles. This theme was observed in the other two



publications, but by the numbers was not as popularly used in those newspapers as it was by *USA Today*.



**Figure 4.46: *USA Today*, July 17, 2007, Sports (3C)**

This article was very unsupportive of Favre's desire to return and the seeming ease with which he placed the Packers in a very difficult situation. The story cited his 'newfound ego' and pointed out that this was not the same Favre who, until now, had been a media darling. Not surprisingly, this article and the others with the same theme were all used in conjunction with the "Judgment" frame.

On the flipside, *USA Today* also used the theme "Favre is a positive reference point" in 12% of the stories.

### **His Body No Longer Willing, Ravens' McNair Ends Career**

Posted on: Friday, 18 April 2008, 06:00 CDT

By Jim Corbett

OWINGS MILLS, Md. — It's been a difficult six weeks for tough-guy, Mississippi-born quarterback legends.

Following the teary-eyed lead of Green Bay Packers icon Brett Favre, who retired March 4, Baltimore Ravens quarterback Steve McNair echoed Favre's sentiment in his retirement news conference Thursday that his own legacy became too heavy a burden.

So will McNair and Hattiesburg neighbor Favre get together for fishing and softball this summer?

"Once things settle down, I'm quite sure," McNair said. "We've got a lot of time on our hands. Only now we'll get together and talk about old times."

**Figure 4.47: *USA Today*, April 18, 2008, Sports (10C)**

This article arguably became more interesting for Favre's inclusion. It also allowed a chance for comparison between the two quarterbacks, both on and off the football field. This theme was used with the "Favre as a reference point for others"



frame. Unfortunately for McNair, his enjoyment of life after the NFL was cut short; he was killed in an apparent murder-suicide in 2009. Favre, along with thousands of other mourners, attended his funeral (Clark, 2009).

The “humble, grateful NFL star” theme was also used in 12% of sample articles on Favre in *USA Today*. Again, this theme spoke to Favre’s quiet appreciation for the physical talents that led him to the upper echelon of NFL quarterbacks.

### **Favre bids tearful farewell to game he loves**

[0 Comments](#) | [USA TODAY, March, 2008](#) | by [Mike Dodd](#)

GREEN BAY, Wis. -- Brett Favre weighed the decision to retire from the National Football League for three years. When the moment came to explain why he's leaving, it took 20 seconds for the emotions to overwhelm him.

The NFL's all-time leading passer laid his heart on the table in a 1-hour, 8-minute news conference at Lambeau Field on Thursday, two days after he announced his retirement from the Green Bay Packers.

"I don't think I've got anything left to give, and that's it," Favre said, choking back tears. "I know I can play, but I don't think I want to."

**Figure 4.48: *USA Today*, March 7, 2008, Sports (1C)**

This particular article was paired with the “Celebration/remembrance of Favre” frame, a fitting tribute to one of the NFL’s best men, both on and off the field. In fact, this frame-theme combination was typical of those published by all three publications directly after Favre’s first retirement (see Figure 6.15, p. 98). Favre was extremely modest as he bowed out of his football career after experiencing great success with the Packers. Most journalists mentioned the tears that Favre shed, as this one did, clearly demonstrating what a difficult time it was for him. Perhaps the difficulties Favre showed with retirement from the very beginning accurately foreshadowed Favre’s eventual return to the game he loved.

Finally, the theme “Time will tell if Favre can be successful in New York; big adjustments ahead for Favre” was used in 8% of the sample stories. Again, this

theme focused on Favre's future with the Jets and the many questions that would be answered by Favre's success—or not—with the Jets.

USA TODAY

## Risky business

Jets take a flier on Favre, Pack back Rodgers as NFL teams test their luck

By Larry Weisman | Sep 5, 2008

Blow on the dice.

Sing a chorus of Luck Be a Lady.

Go all in.

That's the NFL's mind-set as it rumbles into 2008, with players and executives cast as high-stakes gamblers flashing pinkie rings and wads of cash.

The New York Jets, who coveted Brett Favre in the 1991 draft, seemingly won big at the table last month when Favre came out of retirement to find he no longer had a home in Green Bay. Does the 38-year-old passer extraordinaire, acquired in a trade, still have the skills and desire?

"The only reason I came back was I wanted to play. It's as simple as that," says Favre, who tearfully announced his departure in early March but soon found he had spoken prematurely.

**Figure 4.49: USA Today, September 5, 2008, Bonus Section (1F)**

This article pointed out what a big gamble the Jets took by signing Favre. He had nothing left to prove as far as records and accolades. Nothing, that was, except that he still had the Favre magic left. As the article aptly pointed out, only time would tell what Favre was capable of as a New York Jet. The rest of the themes used by *USA Today* and the other publications are presented in Appendix A.

### ***Collective Thoughts on Themes in All Three Publications***

The theme "Uncertain future for Favre" was the most popular one used by all three publications. Because the storyline from first to second retirement involved much speculation, often with both Favre and the Packers being secretive or vague about intentions and plans, this was certainly not a surprise. In fact, the uncertainty probably made it a more salient story than if Favre had been more forthcoming with details of his future.

Also, all three newspapers most commonly paired the "Uncertainty" theme with the popular frame "Moving forward." As Altheide (1996) pointed out, "certain

themes become more appropriate if particular frames are adopted,” (p. 31). Though possible courses of action for Favre and the Packers were circulated through the newspaper articles, ultimately, there was no real indication of the direction the saga might take for the majority of the time. Thus, the “Uncertainty” theme was an appropriate complement for the “Moving forward” frame.

However, there were differences observed with the use of this theme. The *Press Gazette* used the “Uncertainty” theme with a few other frames besides “Moving forward.” These all hit close to home for the publication and were rooted in an explanation of how the situation affected the local area. These frames included “He said he said,” (which outlined the back and forth, often accusatory dialogue between Favre and the Packers) “Favre vs. Rodgers—Comparisons and Competition,” and “Favre decision on 2008 season expected soon” (used exclusively before Favre announced his first retirement).

In addition to the “Moving forward” frame, *USA Today* used the uncertainty theme with just one other frame: “Divorce”. Because of the general, popular nature of the publication, moving forward and the break-up between the Packers and Favre were possibly the most relevant and interesting ways to frame the story for presentation to its audience.

Besides “Moving forward,” The *New York Times* paired the “Uncertainty” theme with the frames “He said he said,” “Rumored return,” “Remarriage,” and “Favre’s durability.” After Favre’s desire to return and his probable destination for the 2008-2009 season were made known, these were obvious ways for the *Times* to frame the stories on Favre, and uncertainty was clearly a common denominator in

all of these instances. The new union between Favre and the Jets, and Favre's durability, were especially salient topics, as these hit close to home with the New York audience and Jets fans, despite the national reach of the publication.

Besides the uncertainty theme, the only other theme shared by the *Green Bay Press Gazette* and one of the other publications was the theme "Humble, grateful NFL star," also used by *USA Today*. Both coupled this theme with the "Celebration/remembrance of Favre" frame, which were also popular in the coverage put forth by both papers. However, this was the sole frame used with this theme in *USA Today*. The *Press Gazette* used multiple other frames to accompany this theme, including the commonly used "Moving forward."

The *New York Times* and *USA Today* both used the theme "Time will tell if Favre can be successful in New York; big adjustments ahead for Favre" often as well; this was not one of the most popular themes used by the *Press Gazette*. Each national publication also paired this theme with the frame "Divorce" one time, but differed in other applications of this theme to stories on Favre. Interestingly, when the *Press Gazette* did use the "Time will tell" theme, the frame was "Remarriage," contrasting with the "Divorce" frame often used by both national publications.

## Getting to know Brett

Favre making a new home in New York

BY ROB DEMOVSKY  
rdemovsk@greenbaypressgazette.com

HEPMSTEAD, N.Y. — In 1991 when Ron Wolf was the assistant general manager for the New York Jets, he was ready to pull the trigger on a trade that he thought would bring Brett Favre to New York.

### Special section online

► Visit [www.PackersNews.com/FavreReturns](http://www.PackersNews.com/FavreReturns) for an archive of stories recapping the tumultuous offseason culminating in the trade of Brett Favre to the New York Jets.



### Galleries online

► To see photo galleries of Brett Favre from Sunday's Jets' practices, go to [www.PackersNews.com](http://www.PackersNews.com) and click on this story.

Favre at No. 33, leaving the Jets to take another quarterback, Browning Nagle.

Less than a year later, Favre fell out of Favre with the Falcons. Wolf

Rather, it's to wonder what might have been for Favre had he spent the majority of his career in the bright lights of the big city and to ponder how he will

to find out if that will prove correct. Since the trade was finalized Wednesday night, Favre's image has been slashed across the covers of the New York tabloids and on the nightly news. Fans have flocked here in record numbers to watch his first few practices with the Jets.

His every move has been scrutinized so much so that Jets coach Eric Mangini only half-jokingly opened his news conference on Sunday by reporting that Favre's breakfast

Figure 4.50: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, August 11, 2008, Sports (C1,3)

## From Green Bay to Broadway: Favre Is a Jet

By JUDY BATTISTA

Published: August 6, 2008

For Favre, the trade ends a protracted divorce from the Packers that captivated the [N.F.L.](#) and set Favre free from the team that he led to a [Super Bowl](#) title and for whom he had become an icon. Favre also won three Most Valuable but when the Packers did not welcome him back after he went, Favre became the unexpected object of the Jets' ardor. In the periphery of trade talks as Favre's drama droned on. But the team that is often overlooked, bringing with him a glamour

Figure 4.51: *New York Times*, August 7, 2008, Sports (D1)

USA TODAY

### Iffy season set to yield its answers

By Mike Lopresti | Sep 5, 2008

Good thing the real games are here. The NFL preseason has been so confusing. Let's see if we have this all straight.

Peyton Manning and Tom Brady, quarterbacking ironmen who between them have 301 consecutive starts, did not play one down in an exhibition game because neither could walk without a limp. The customers in Indianapolis and New England looked at their expensive season tickets and pondered Sundays with Jim Sorgi and Matt Cassel.

Brett Favre, the retired Green Bay Packer, is now neither. He plays for the New York Jets after a divorce that was messy enough for its own National Enquirer staff meeting. Ricky

Figure 4.52: *USA Today*, September 5, 2008, Bonus Section (3F)

The *Press Gazette* article focused on Favre making a new home in New York, while the national papers both used the word “Divorce” in articles regarding how Favre might perform as a Jet. (However, the *Times* also used the “Remarriage” frame in some sample stories).

Besides just speculating on how Favre would fare in New York, two of the other popular themes observed in the *New York Times* sample articles described how Favre actually performed for the Jets during the season. The spectrum ranged from great (theme: “Classic Favre performance meets expectations of Jets”) to grim (theme: “Favre’s play unimpressive; Favre looks old as Jets struggle”). This was not

surprising, as interest in the Jets was piqued when Favre became the team's leader; stories tied together with themes on Favre's play were to be expected.

The only publication that popularly used the theme "Favre is wrong and/or Packers are right" was *USA Today*. However, scrutiny of the numbers revealed that *USA Today* published only two stories with this theme, while the *New York Times* had just one story, and the *Green Bay Press Gazette* had three stories that presented this theme. It is important to reiterate that the number of total stories in the national publications, especially *USA Today* can make the outcomes and comparisons seem skewed. But the fact that the *Green Bay Press Gazette* found it fitting for only three of 212 stories (1.4% of its total articles) to use this theme speaks volumes in comparison to the rest of the stories on Favre. Calling Favre on his transgressions was clearly not at the top of the list for the *Press Gazette* articles.

Additionally, it is noteworthy that the *Press Gazette* included nearly 70 unique themes in coverage of the Favre storyline, many of which were used just once. While these could have been coded in an 'Other' category, many of the unique themes provided additional insight into the Favre story. Therefore, each was coded individually, demonstrating the variety of angles observed in the storyline.

## CHAPTER 5: CONFLICT AND TONE

### Conflict

In addition to the frames and themes, there was other evidence in the articles that supported both differences and similarities between the framing by national and regional newspapers, in addition to arguments both for and against the legitimacy of structural pluralism in the Favre story. Because conflict, mainly the disagreement between Favre and the Packers, was an inherent part of the story, and because its presence or absence in the articles published by each newspaper potentially spoke to the larger idea of structural pluralism, the appearance (or not) of conflict was coded for each article. The results are shown in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1: Articles with Conflict vs. No Conflict in All Three Publications**

Publication		# of Articles	%
<i>Green Bay Press Gazette</i>	Conflict	109	51%
	No conflict	103	49%
<i>New York Times</i>	Conflict	23	51%
	No conflict	22	49%
<i>USA Today</i>	Conflict	16	64%
	No conflict	9	36%

Determining if conflict was present or not entailed reading each article and determining if the presentation of conflict was a main purpose of the story. For example, if the skirmish between Favre and the Packers was simply mentioned in passing as the reason why Favre was a New York Jet, but was primarily about the effect Favre had on the merchandise market in New York, the story was not coded as

having conflict. But, if the article focused on the drawn out disagreement between Favre and the Packers, the story had conflict and was classified as such.

### ***Green Bay Press Gazette***

As Table 5.1 showed, the number of stories with conflict vs. articles without conflict was almost even for the *Press Gazette*. However, there *were* more stories with conflict than not. If structural pluralism were at play, one would expect that the articles without conflict would far outweigh those that included the discord characterizing much of the Favre saga. To reiterate what Donohue, Olien, and Tichenor (1968) suggested, the media in smaller, homogeneous areas tended to report conflict less than larger communities with more complex structures and a larger array of opinions to convey.

### ***New York Times***

The conflict vs. no conflict articles included in the *New York Times* sample were also shown in Table 5.1. The ratio was nearly even, though the stories in which conflict was evident narrowly won out. The overall numbers might, at a glance, support structural pluralism. However, the number of sample articles was relatively small, and had a few stories been coded differently, the outcome could have been different.

### ***USA Today***

Table 5.1 also showed the number of articles containing conflict, as well as those without for *USA Today*. The picture was a bit clearer for this publication, as the number of stories containing conflict clearly outweighed those without for this sample. At face value, this supports the structural pluralism described by Donohue,



Olien, and Tichenor (1968), but the issue of the small number of sample articles must be revisited for this publication as well. It is difficult to tell with a sample of this size whether or not the number of articles for both conflict and no conflict is an accurate depiction.

### ***Collective Thoughts on Conflict in All Three Publications***

Based on the above information, it would be difficult to completely resolve the issue of the validity of structural pluralism with regard to this particular storyline. Because the Favre saga was inherently full of conflict, perhaps the *Press Gazette* was simply reporting on what was happening at the time. Future studies might elaborate on how or if structural pluralism can account for stories that have inherent disagreement. Though there was an absence of literature on this topic, Mikelson's (2007) work did not support the idea that smaller newspapers tend to avoid reporting conflict; her study covered a controversial, conflict-rich wolf reintroduction in Idaho.

As Table 5.2 shows, the two national publications observed together showed more support for structural pluralism than taken alone. Still, a larger number of articles might have more clearly strengthened or discounted the case for structural pluralism.

**Table 5.2: Presence of Conflict in Local vs. National Publications**

<i>Publication</i>		# of Articles	%
<i>Green Bay Press Gazette</i>	Conflict	109	51%
	No conflict	103	49%
<i>New York Times &amp; USA Today</i>	Conflict	39	56%
	No conflict	31	44%

## Tone

Tone was another category that Altheide (1996) suggested for inclusion in his ECA protocol. Tone referred to whether the overall “sound” or presentation of the article was positive, negative, or neutral with regard to Favre. While part of this determination came from the author’s presentation of Favre, some of the decision on tone inevitably resulted from the feelings each sample story invoked in me, likely a result of my long history in and around Packer culture. Overall, tone was fairly easy to determine, and none of the sample articles presented doubt as to their classification (See Table 5.3).

**Table 5.3: Tone in All Three Publications**

		Positive	Negative	Neutral
<i>Green Bay Press Gazette</i>	Articles	70	43	99
	Percentage	33%	20%	47%
<i>New York Times</i>	Articles	13	17	15
	Percentage	29%	38%	33%
<i>USA Today</i>	Articles	6	7	12
	Percentage	24%	28%	48%

### ***Collective Thoughts on Tone for All Three Publications***

Positive articles in the *Green Bay Press Gazette* sample were not difficult to find, especially around the time of Favre’s retirement. It was also interesting that while there was more conflict than not in the *Press Gazette* stories (see Table 5.2), there were far more positive and neutral articles than negative ones (see Table 5.3). In contrast, negative and neutral articles ruled the *New York Times* and *USA Today* samples, as positive stories made up the smallest amount of the total sample in both of these publications. The results of the national publications were in line with previous studies on structural pluralism.

However, the results for the *Press Gazette* presented a conundrum and were further pared down in Table 5.4 to compare the tone of stories with conflict to the tone in the articles that did not contain conflict.

**Table 5.4: Tone for Green Bay Press Gazette Articles With and Without Conflict**

	Conflict	No Conflict
Positive	9	61
Negative	40	3
Neutral	60	39
<b>Totals</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>103</b>

The *Press Gazette* published far more no conflict, positive articles than positive articles in which conflict was apparent.

## Will Favre's legacy shine like a Starr?

### Packers heroes continue to rise out of turmoil

BY TONY WALTER  
twalter@greenbaypressgazette.com

There is historical precedence to prove that a Green Bay Packers hero can survive a fall from grace and not lose his place in the hearts of most fans.

Brett Favre's ongoing

saga with the Packers has fans taking sides, but, if history is consistent, will not deprive him of his honored place as one of most popular players ever to pull on a Packers jersey.

In fact, Favre and Bart Starr — who are both scheduled to be presenters at Saturday's Packers Hall of Fame banquet — stand apart from everyone in the

hearts of Packers fans. It's in part because of their longevity, in part because of their impact, and in part because of their personalities that add up to popularity and respect of the highest degree from a seemingly infinite number of admirers.

Favre is controversial now because of his request to be released from the Packers and the organization's refusal to release him.

"Favre's welcome back, but the scenery has

changed. There may be a different role," Packers General Manager Ted Thompson said Saturday.

Starr's popularity was unmatched when he reached the end of his career — all with the Packers — in 1971, having engineered five world championships. But his nine-year head coaching tenure with the Packers seemed forever climbing toward success but never reaching it.

► See Legacy, A-2

**Figure 5.1: Green Bay Press Gazette, July 11, 2008, News (A1)**

The above excerpt was a rare positive article in light of the obvious conflict between Favre and the Packers that followed his announcement of plans to return to the NFL. The article noted Favre would remain a popular Packers figure, regardless of how the drama between him and the Packers played out.

The majority of *Press Gazette* articles during this time were not so optimistic, however. Neutral and negative articles were more prominent in the *Press Gazette* stories with conflict. Additionally, the majority of articles that contained conflict were published during the tumultuous time after Favre's 'itch' to return was publicized.

This suggested that even the regional paper was not afraid to criticize Favre during this time, despite the theoretical indication that smaller communities with less pluralism would shy away from the reporting of conflict (Donohue, Olien, & Tichenor, 1968). Perhaps a combination of the conflict and tone categories would paint a more accurate picture of whether or not structural pluralism was at work. More research is warranted in this area, especially for stories that are inherently full of conflict, as was the Favre saga. It is entirely possible that context in which conflict is presented must be observed as it relates to structural pluralism.

Additionally, despite this study's classification of the *Press Gazette* as a small, regional newspaper relative to the *Times* and *USA Today*, the *Press Gazette* may be large enough to report diverse ideas representative of its coverage area. On the same note, perhaps the original structural pluralism work of Olien, Donohue, and Tichenor (1968) is being undermined by the availability of online newspapers. Even publications representing small towns are readily accessible by a wide range of diverse readers. Perhaps this has influenced the style of reporting by smaller newspapers, as they strive to meet the needs of a varied readership. Additional studies in this area are needed to shed more light on this matter.

## CHAPTER 6: SOURCES AND FAVRE AS MAIN TOPIC

### Sources

As Altheide (1987b) noted, each form of media communicates news uniquely, using its own guidelines or “formats” (p. 181) to structure and present reports. Newspapers are no different, and sources are one important means by which print media conveys information. In the case of Favre, numerous sources were used in the sample articles, from the Packers management to Favre’s friends and family to history scholars in Mississippi.

In addition to keeping tabs on which sources were used in the Favre stories, if more than one source was used in an article, the source used most often was classified as the *main source*. Often, an imbalance in the use of sources can affect the way in which a story is framed. Sources can lend credibility to a story, and the use of a certain source at the expense of another may affect the framing of the entire story (Druckman, 2001).

### ***Green Bay Press Gazette***

The most common source used by the *Green Bay Press Gazette* was the Green Bay Packers’ management, used in 67 articles. This category included General Manager (GM) Ted Thompson, head coach Mike McCarthy, and former GM Ron Wolf (the man who lobbied to obtain Favre from the Atlanta Falcons; see Figure 4.28). Of these usages, more than half of the articles quoted the management as the main source. The Packers organization was largely affected by Favre’s decisions

throughout most of the yearlong timeframe and had plenty to say about the situation; it was not surprising that the management was quoted most often on the topic of Favre.

**Kids press Packers coach for news on Favre**

**McCarthy appears at Boys & Girls Club**

BY VANESSA MIRANDA  
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Adult Packers fans aren't the only ones coach Mike McCarthy has to answer to. Kids at the Boys & Girls Club of Green Bay grilled McCarthy on Wednesday on the rumors of retired quarterback Brett Favre's return. McCarthy was there to

**"We're going to be a good football team regardless of what happens."**

— Mike McCarthy, Packers coach

announce a \$100,000 donation to the club and took questions during the news conference.

"Is Brett Favre coming back?" was the first question, asked by 11-year-old Miranda Black of Oconto Falls.

The audience burst into laughter, and McCarthy kindly replied that the question would be addressed at another time.

Miranda set the theme for the rest of the Q&A session as McCarthy fielded questions ranging from how old Favre is to why he left.

A concerned young boy eagerly raised his hand and asked, "How well do you think the Packers will do without Brett Favre?"

"We're going to be a good football team regardless of what happens," McCarthy said.

"It's a football team that has worked very hard since the end of last season. The team has done a great job of improving. And we have a big training camp coming up, and that's always a big part of our preparation."

The coach politely avoided answering any questions regarding Favre, and when a kid asked if he would mind signing an autograph, McCarthy joked, "Sure. It's better than answering these questions."

This was McCarthy's first public appearance since the talk of Favre's possible comeback started.

He declined further comment to reporters.

**More inside**

- McCarthy, Packers donate \$100,000, A-3
- Favre talk doesn't faze Aaron Rodgers, C-1

Figure 6.1: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, July 10, 2008, News (A1)

This article highlighted an appearance by Mike McCarthy at the local Boys & Girls Club. The topic of the Favre drama had not escaped the younger generation, as McCarthy was asked multiple questions about Favre and his possible return, though the coach did not answer any Favre-related questions.

It was noteworthy that Favre himself, the subject of the melee, was not the most used source in the *Press Gazette* articles. He was used as a source in 43 sample articles, and was the main source in just over half of them. When the entire storyline was looked at in context, however, this made sense. There was a good deal of time between Favre's 'itch' to return being publicized and his first comments on the situation. This alone may account for this discrepancy, as Favre was quiet during much of this time, accounting for the popular use of the "Uncertainty" theme by all three publications.

Favre's friends and family (including quotes from unnamed sources close to the quarterback) were used as sources in the sample articles 25 times, and were the

main source of information in just under half of these instances (44%). There were just five stories in which Favre and his friends/family were simultaneously used as sources. Three of the stories were published after Favre retired from the Packers and depended on quotes from family and friends to speculate on what Favre would do with his newfound free time. Quotes from Favre's friends and family also aided in the understanding of why Favre was displeased with Ted Thompson's actions after Favre expressed a desire to return to football. It was no secret that Favre was a family man who had close friendships that he had fostered throughout his years with the Packers. Perhaps in the stories in which Favre himself was not able to speak his mind, his friends and family were able to provide a voice for him.



Figure 6.2: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, July 6, 2008, Sports (C1, 3); Mike Vandermause

The excerpt above quoted Favre's mother, Bonita, who suggested that her son was pressured to retire so the Packers could move on, as the quarterback's final playing days were inevitably nearing. Favre was not quoted in this article.

Packer fans were also familiar sources for quotes in the sample articles observed throughout the entire sample period. The green and gold faithful were

used 23 times, and were the main source in every instance. Interestingly, only one *Press Gazette* story quoted both Favre and fans.



Figure 6.3: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, March 9, 2008, News (A1-2)

The article and above excerpt noted that Favre and his winning ways brought life back to Titledtown, which had suffered a series of unfortunate seasons prior to his arrival. Favre quotes are fan-related, as he noted a family feel to the Packers and their city. Favre fans did not just care about him on a superficial level related to wins and losses; they felt his personal pain along with him. Favre called his relationship with the Packers a 'perfect fit.'

Other times the fan quotes were used to monitor the feelings of Packer nation regarding the Favre saga. From their thoughts on his retirement, to whether the Packers should welcome Favre back, fans certainly varied in opinion.



# Fans' emotions run gamut from surprise to resignation

BY RICHARD RYMAN  
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There was a mix of reactions from Packers fans Tuesday at Lambeau Field as word of Brett Favre's retirement made the rounds with the green and gold faithful.

too -- cautious faith.

"The way he looked in Dallas and preseason, I think he can do the job," he said "But we'll have to see."

Members of the Manka family of Kennewick, Wash., who were at Lambeau Field on Tuesday on vacation, were sur-

**Figure 6.4: Green Bay Press Gazette, August 7, 2008, News (A2)**

The article above quoted fans after Favre's first retirement. While fans generally supported his decision, many were surprised that Favre would call it quits after such a successful season; others wished him well as he took some time for himself. There was an overall feeling of gratitude for what Favre had done in Green Bay, both on and off the field.

NFL coaches and players also had plenty to say about the Favre situation throughout the sample article period, and these professionals were used as sources 22 times. Though this was just one time less than Packer fans were used, coaches and players were only the main sources quoted in half of the stories. Obviously Favre's retirements and un-retirement had a ripple effect across the NFL. Numerous NFL heavy-hitters weighed in on the saga, including the man who would later become Favre's head coach, Brad Childress of the Minnesota Vikings, Peyton Manning of the Colts, and Dallas Cowboy QB Tony Romo.

## Chase is still on: Peyton weighs in on Favre, streak

The Associated Press

THIBODAUX, La. — Peyton Manning said he'd like one day to challenge Brett Favre's record streak of 253 consecutive starts in the NFL, but then smiled and noted that can't happen unless Favre stops playing.

"I'd like to gain some ground on Favre if I could, but it looks like that might not happen. I can't gain on him if he never stops playing," Manning said, referring to reports Favre is considering coming back.

Manning did not say whether he thought Favre should come back.

Manning has started 160 straight games dating to the first game of his rookie season.

Manning went on to call Favre's record "the most impressive" in all sporting categories, even more so than Cal Ripken's streak of 2,632 games in baseball.

"What Favre has done, the way that he's played, to answer the bell every Sunday for his teammates is something that's impressive," Manning said.

Figure 6.5: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, July 13, 2008, Sports (C2)

While some athletes offered judgment on Favre's return to the NFL, in the above article, Peyton Manning chose to comment on Favre's impressive start streak. Manning was the active player closest to overtaking Favre. However, as Manning stated, he could not start inching his way to surpassing Favre's record if Favre continued to play.

Vikings coach Childress also took a non-judgmental route in his comments on the drama. His situation was also complicated by reports that the Vikings had tampered with Favre, trying to entice him to join their team when Favre was still technically on the Green Bay Packers' roster even after he retired. (The charges were later dropped, as the NFL found insufficient evidence to issue fines or other legal ramifications).

## Childress mum as he watches Favre saga

Minnesota Vikings coach Brad Childress has watched from afar — across the border in Minnesota and from Florida during his vacation — as the rival Green Bay Packers and Brett Favre appear headed to a messy divorce.

"It's kind of interesting to watch, isn't it?" Childress said Tuesday, referring to the back-and-forth

shipping between Favre, who wants to be released, and the Packers, who say they do not plan to oblige that request.

NFL guidelines prohibit Childress from commenting on players under contract with other teams, and the coach said he remains committed to third-year quarterback Tarvaris Jackson going into this season.

One of the interesting

suppliants to arise is the suggestion that Favre, the three-time MVP, could join the Vikings for one more run at a title.

"You can make an argument for one side and an argument for another," Childress said of the hypothetical prospect of bringing an All-Pro quarterback into the mix. "But I can't waste a lot of energy. All I can do is take a look at the waivers every day

Figure 6.6: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, July 16, 2008, Sports (C4); AP

In the excerpt above, Childress noted that the saga was interesting if nothing else. Though it was widely reported that Favre wanted to play for the Vikings, as they would have had a legitimate shot at a Super Bowl run with a decent quarterback like Favre, under league rules Childress could not actually comment on the situation.

Finally, Packer players were used 20 times in the sample articles, and were the main sources in 45% of the stories in which they were quoted. Because these players were experiencing the situation in living color, they were not grouped together with the rest of the NFL players in the category discussed above.

Players grow tired of the Favre frenzy

BY TOM PELISSERO  
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Whether Brett Favre stays or goes, his Green Bay Packers teammates are eager for the saga — and the expansive media presence it's brought to the locker room every day — to come to an end.

"Whatever's going on," cornerback Al Harris said, "I hope the organization can go ahead and can get it out of our hair and out of our heads, because that's the way it seems to us. Everybody in the locker room is like, it's on us. And we don't know what the hell's going on."

**Injury report**  
Did not practice: WR Jake Allen (groin), C Scott Wells (back), DE Kabeer Gbaja-Biamila (knee), DT Ryan Pickett (hamstring), DT Justin Harrell (back).

**Returned to practice:** RB DeShawn Wynn (concussion).

**New injuries:** DT Johnny Jolly, TE Tory Humphrey.

Driver, who has spoken out as favorably as any player as Favre comeback talk has escalated the past month, said he's done discussing his friend's situation.

"I'm not talking about the (Favre) issue no more," Driver said. "It's going to continue going, and by us talking about it, it's going to continue and continue. Somebody has to get to the point where we just draw a line and say we're done with it. I'm done. I'm done talking about it."

"I can't keep worrying about it, and I'm not worrying about it, but every day, no one's talking about

running the first fence of Tuesday often his backs if there's a ground, bounce

No. 2 at week, C starting center \$ trunk in guard J center \$ worked the No. center \$ line, but backup being th

Aft during t Tony Moll wo during t ping del Bolton

Figure 6.7: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, August 6, 2008, Sports (C1)

This excerpt noted that many players no longer cared what happened in the Favre saga—they just wanted the unnecessary distraction to go away. Despite a new season and fresh start for the Packers on the horizon, the Favre situation dominated the locker room questions from the media. Most of the players were just plain sick and tired of the entire situation.

Additionally, it should be noted that Aaron Rodgers was given his own category, as his involvement in the storyline was more prominent than any other Packer player. Though he was not one of the top sources used in the sample (he was used 11 times in the sample articles), Rodgers took the high road during the uncertain summer. While many articles compared and contrasted Favre and Rodgers' physical abilities, stories that detailed how each dealt with the uncertain situation allowed the reader to make their own comparisons of Favre and Rodgers on a more personal level.

**Rodgers feels the support of mates**

**Packers can't be divided by 4**

BY ROB DEMOVSKY  
rdemovsk@greenbaypressgazette.com

Mike McCarthy's message to his players as training camp opened Monday was essentially the same one he delivered to the media two days earlier.

"It was short and sweet: Aaron's our guy. If Brett comes, we'll handle it. But right now and for our future, Aaron's our guy," Green Bay Packers receiver Greg Jennings said, recalling his head coach's words. "We're working with (No.) 12 and not (No.) 4. It's the same as when we worked with Favre. Everybody has to support Aaron. That's what it's all about, coming together as a team and moving forward, and that's what we're trying to do."

As much as Monday — the first day of training camp practice — was another day to question what Packers General Manager Ted Thompson will do to resolve the Brett Favre situation, it also was a time for others to voice their support for Rodgers, who spoke with reporters for nearly 25 minutes at his locker.

"It's been great," Rodgers said of the support he has received from teammates. "I've gotten a lot of phone calls from guys throughout the summer."

When asked if he had any doubt that those in the locker room were behind him, Rodgers said: "I don't. They're going to be behind whoever is under center. They've seen the hard work I put in. I think I've earned a lot of respect from the guys, playing on the scout team, being here 100 percent of the last three offseasons, so you can't help but respect that."

**Camp schedule**  
Today: 2 p.m. (pads)  
Wednesday: 8:45 a.m. (shells); 6:30 p.m. (pads)

**More stories**  
➤ Favre may show up at practice later in week, A-1  
➤ Setback slows Harrell, C-2  
➤ Notebook, Insider, C-2

**Video, galleries at PackersNews.com**  
Click on this story at [www.PackersNews.com](http://www.PackersNews.com) to watch a video of how Aaron Rodgers did in camp.  
Photos: Check out two photo galleries by Evan Siegle.  
Chat: Sports editor Mike Vandermause chats from 11 a.m. to noon today.  
Podcast: Tom Pelissaro talks about the best and worst of Day 1.

➤ See Rodgers, C-3

Figure 6.8: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, July 29, 2008, Sports (C1,3)

For example, Rodgers noted in the above excerpt that many of his teammates supported him and had called to offer kind words about the sticky situation. Rodgers was also told he was still the starting quarterback for the Packers, and he was doing his best to focus on the game and not the unusual circumstances surrounding his situation. Certainly more stories during the sample period involved and quoted Aaron Rodgers. However, if the story was solely about Rodgers, it was excluded from the sample, since the study was primarily about Favre.

In stark contrast to Rodgers' excellent working relationship with the Packer management at this point, Favre accused the management of telling half-truths and pushing him out of the organization at a time when he was not sure that retirement was the best choice for him.

# Favre breaks silence on retirement

He says Pack told him playing here 'not an option'

BY TOM PELISSERO  
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The Green Bay Packers say they're willing to take back Brett Favre, but the still-retired quarterback says he was told differently in a June 20 conversation with coach Mike McCarthy.

"I was told that playing in Green Bay was not an option," Favre said in an interview that aired Monday night on Fox News. "Regardless of what you hear from up there — and, you know, I'm not making it up. I was told that playing in Green Bay was not an option."

Favre's first public remarks since Friday's rejected request for his release counters statements by the Packers, who said Saturday they were open to their longtime star's return, albeit in an undetermined role.

The roughly 11-minute segment — the first of a two-part series that will wrap tonight on "On the Record with Greta Van Susteren" — also included statements from Favre suggesting his retirement was a rushed decision and that he remains undecided about playing again, but feels the Packers don't want him to.

"I was told that, 'We can't imagine you playing, or can't envision you playing with another team' as well," Favre said. "What does that tell me? Tells me, 'We don't want you playing, period.'"

Though Favre once again said the Packers didn't force him to retire, he was critical of the team's handling of recent developments.

The segment was filmed Monday in Mississippi after Favre's wife, Deanna, who previously had been interviewed by Van Susteren, e-mailed and said

her husband wanted to respond to the Packers' statements.

"If you've moved on, you tell me one thing. Don't come back and tell the public (something else)," Favre said. "Just say it ... 'We've moved on, and we're going to work with Brett on whatever it is.' Don't make up a lot of stuff or give half of the truth ... say, 'We want to let you be our backup' and ... 'he's got to understand this.'"

"It's ridiculous. It really is," Packers spokesman Jeff Blum e-mailed a short statement from the team: "We currently have nothing to add on this matter."

**More inside**

- About 30 Favre fans rally in Milwaukee, A-2
- Chicago Packer backer behind Favre phone poll, A-2
- QB suggests Packers not entirely truthful, C-1
- Mike Vandermause column: Relationship between Favre, Packers beyond repair, C-1

**Special section**

Brett Favre retired in March — so we thought. Visit [www.PackersNews.com/special](http://www.PackersNews.com/special) for our special section devoted to Favre's initial decision to hang it up after 16 years with the Packers.

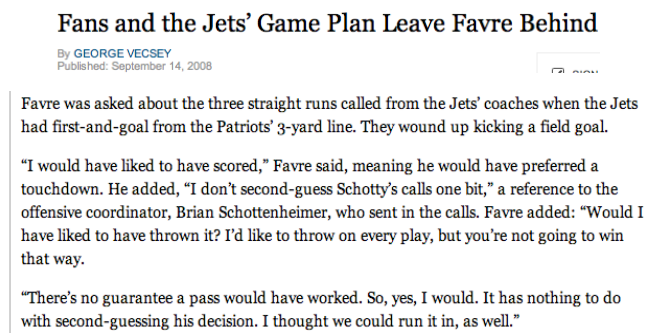
Figure 6.9: Green Bay Press Gazette, July 15, 2008, News (A1)

The above article outlined the first in a series of interviews Favre had with Greta Van Susteren of FOX News in which Favre lambasted the Packers for their actions before and after his retirement. Though nothing was clear about Favre's

future with the Packers at this time, it was obvious that his relationship with them was rapidly deteriorating.

### ***New York Times***

In contrast to his use in the *Press Gazette*, Favre was the most used source in the *New York Times* sample articles, quoted in 18 stories and used as the main source in 61% of these instances.



**Figure 6.10: *New York Times*, September 15, 2008, Sports (D3)**

In contrast to the less-than-pretty picture Favre's *Press Gazette* quotes painted of the Packers' management, Favre was more polite with the Jets. Favre noted that while he would have liked to run different plays than were called, he respected the offensive coordinator's decisions and would do what was asked of him.

The Jets had plenty to say about the Favre situation as well, as the organization's coaches, players, and management were the second most used sources (15 times) in the *New York Times* sample, and were the main source in 47% of those instances.

## On Offense, Pains Grow for Favre and Jets

By GREG BISHOP

Published: September 24, 2008

Mangini pointed to Favre's completion rate — 70 percent in 90 attempts — as more proof of the offense's production. Faneca, the left guard, described his unit as “an explosive offense in waiting.”

“We're a good offense,” Faneca said. “It's a unique situation. There is a lot of room to grow. You're going to see a different offense as the season goes on compared to where we are now.”

**Figure 6.11: *New York Times*, September 25, 2008; Sports (D5)**

Though Favre and the Jets were struggling to get the offense rolling at the beginning of the season, both coaches and players were confident that the team was moving in the right direction. As this excerpt pointed out, Favre was very productive on offense, despite the loss in the game mentioned. This was the case in many instances, as the Jets organization seemed to be trying to convince itself that signing Favre was the right move.

The *Times* also included thoughts and commentary from other NFL coaches and players (excluding the Packers and Jets).

## Focus Heaped on Jets Does Not Faze Giants

By MIKE OGLE

Published: August 22, 2008

Pierce bristled a bit and continued to toy with the reporters when it was suggested that somehow the Giants were now under the radar because of the attention Favre had been receiving in New York.

“Maybe media-wise, and that's fine,” Pierce said. “If the media wants to cover them more and be in their locker room, that's fine with us.” He then looked out of the corners of his eyes at the reporters as if checking to see if any of them cared, or even noticed, that he had just indirectly insulted them.

Nobody budged. The questions kept coming. So Pierce offered a piece of advice for Favre, who played the previous 16 seasons in a small market that adored his every move.

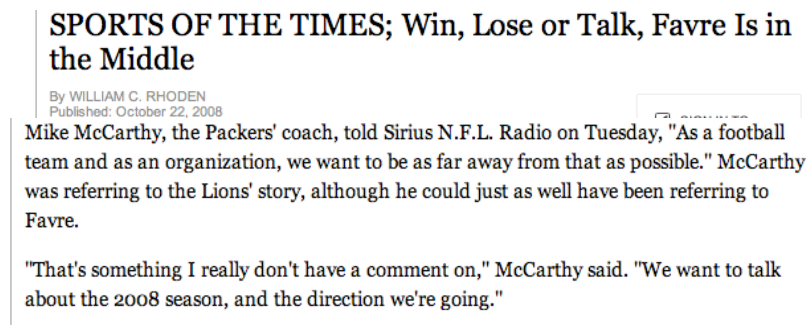
“If Favre starts 0 and 2 or throws a couple of interceptions,” Pierce warned, “he'll get welcomed to New York real well.”

**Figure 6.12: *New York Times*, August 23, 2008; Sports (D11)**

In the article containing the excerpt above, New York Giants players give opinions and comments on Favre's arrival in New York. While some did not mind that Favre was hogging the media spotlight, Giant Antonio Pierce noted that if Favre

did not deliver the stellar performance the Jets were expecting, New York fans might not be very understanding.

The *New York Times* used the Packers' management as a source 10 times, and they were the main source of information in 60% of these instances.



**Figure 6.13: *New York Times*, October 22, 2008, Sports (B13)**

In the above excerpt, Packers' coach Mike McCarthy was clearly happy to put any Favre drama far behind him and the Packer organization. Favre was accused of giving inside information on the Packers to an upcoming divisional opponent, the Detroit Lions. While Favre denied the claims, it was another example of how far apart Favre and the Packers had drifted since his first retirement.

Other NFL coaches and players were oft-used sources in the *Times* as well, cited in 8 sample articles and used as a main source three quarters of the time.



**Figure 6.14: *New York Times*, December 29, 2008, Sports (D1)**



The above excerpt provided a fitting ending to the season—for Chad Pennington. In a somewhat ironic twist, the quarterback shunned by the Jets in favor of Favre was the one who dashed any playoff hopes Favre and the Jets clung to at the end of the season. The Dolphins defeated the Jets and won the division, and in the process, answered any lingering questions about the early season decisions the Jets made at the quarterback position.

Finally, NFL retirees and their families, friends, coaches, and teammates were used often enough (in 7 articles) by the *Times* to warrant their own category and were the main sources nearly 86% of the time.



**Figure 6.15: *New York Times*, October 10, 2008, Sports (B11)**

This excerpt and the remainder of the article quoted numerous NFL retirees that also had the distinction of playing second fiddle to Favre throughout his tenure in Green Bay. All recalled him as an extraordinary quarterback, but also recounted his practical jokes and humble demeanor, among other things that made such a unique character.

## USA Today

*USA Today* used Favre and the Packer management equally as often, making these two sources the most quoted (each were used 7 times) in the sample.

However, Favre was the main source in 86% of the stories in which he was quoted, while the Packers were only the main source 71% of the time.

### Packers move on minus Favre, begin the Rodgers era

Updated 7/29/2008 4:24 PM | Comments: 134 | Recommend: 16 | E-mail | Save | Print | Reprints & Permissions | RSS

By Jarrett Bell, USA TODAY

The Packers have told Favre — who tearfully announced his retirement March 6 but has had a change of heart — he can't have his job back.

Or even *compete* for the job.

That's Favre, who has a league-record 442 career touchdown passes but whose last pass was intercepted in overtime to set up the New York Giants' NFC title-game victory. Favre, the popular Mr. Everyman who has started an NFL-record 275 consecutive games but is pushing 39 years old. Favre, the NFL's only three-time MVP, who last won the award 11 years ago.

The Packers are moving on with unproven fourth-year man Aaron Rodgers at quarterback.

"How strange is it?" Packers coach Mike McCarthy said, repeating the question. "I haven't thought about it. We practiced all spring without Brett."

Favre said he told Thompson on Saturday that, seeking to minimize distractions, he would give the Packers a couple of days to resolve the issue before reporting to camp. Under that scenario, he could be in camp at midweek.

"They'll drag this out, asking (for) a king's ransom, hoping it all goes away," Favre told ESPN's Chris Mortensen on Sunday. "I asked Ted, 'Am I welcome in the building if I report?' And Ted was just shattered. He said, 'Brett, you can't do that — you'll get me fired.'"

Thompson agreed Monday that a couple of days of camp without Favre would allow a window to complete a trade and said he had had "kicking-the-tires" talks with teams. But he denied telling Favre he felt his job could be jeopardized if the quarterback showed up.

"Sometimes things get skewed by the time they get out," Thompson said.

Figure 6.16: *USA Today*, July 29, 2008, Sports (1C)

The excerpt above was from an article that quoted both Favre and the Packers regarding their decision to move forward with Aaron Rodgers at the quarterback position. Favre spoke out against the Packers' stance that he should not report to training camp. The Packer organization was strongly committed to its own position and offered no second-guesses.

NFL coaches and players (excluding the Packers and Jets), as well as Rodgers, were each used in four *USA Today* sample articles. Additionally, each was used as the main source in half of the sample stories in which they were quoted.

## **Risky business**

Jets take a flier on Favre, Pack back Rodgers as NFL teams test their luck

By Larry Weisman,  
USA TODAY

Familiar faces are few. There's tight end Bubba Franks, a teammate for eight years in Green Bay; receiver David Clowney, who was with the Packers last year; and cornerback Ahmad Carroll, a former No. 1 pick of the Pack. Favre is in the AFC East and not the NFC North, trying to find a comfort level.

"Every now and then you can come into a situation like this and lose your focus," Franks says. "Brett's handling it well. He's starting to have fun out there."

Favre's arrival could change the face of the AFC East, which the New England Patriots have won for five consecutive years. In that span, only one other team in the division (the Jets, in 2004 and 2006) has made the playoffs.

**Figure 6.17: *USA Today*, September 5, 2008, Bonus Section (1F)**

This excerpt contained a quote from Bubba Franks, a former Green Bay teammate of Favre's who was also on the Jets team during his one season in New York. Though distractions were plentiful for Favre, Franks had confidence that Favre would be fine in his new home.

### ***Collective Thoughts on Sources in All Three Publications***

All three publications used Favre and the Packers' management in the top three sources during the sample period. It would be an understatement to say this was not surprising. Obviously Favre and the Packers were the main players for most of the dramatic period between Favre's retirement and his signing with the Jets. It was understandable that these two sources would be cited most often, as they were clearly the most involved in the drama.

Looking more closely, both national publications used Favre as the main source in the majority of sample articles, while the *Press Gazette* cited the Packers' management most often. Perhaps the *New York Times* and *USA Today* found the times that Favre actually spoke about the situation to be most newsworthy. Because the *Press Gazette* was the hometown paper of the Green Bay Packers, and not just Brett Favre, its use of the management as the most quoted source spoke to this idea.

Also, since the sample period extended after Favre was traded to the Jets (but still remained a hot news item in Green Bay), the management was likely a more available, useful source of information at this time.

The *Press Gazette* stayed close to home for sources in most of their articles, most often citing from within the Packers' organization and using Favre and his friends and family as sources. In addition to using Favre and the Packers' management, the *Times* and *USA Today* reached across the sports nation, looking to NFL teams and players, in addition to NFL retirees for quotes more often than the *Press Gazette*.

### **Favre as Main Topic**

Despite the prominence of the Favre storyline, not all sample articles that fit the criteria for inclusion were mainly about Favre. Because the Favre situation had such wide-reaching effects, it was not surprising that the stories published were extremely varied and often mentioned Favre only in passing. However, often these short fragments on Favre were enough to warrant inclusion of the article for coding.

# For Favre, others, 38 is enough

Few QBs played well beyond that barrier

BY TOM PELISSERO

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John Elway walked away at age 38. So did Dan Marino, Joe Montana and Steve Young.

Brett Favre joined them on Tuesday, choosing to move on at the same time as many of the other great quarterbacks who played during his career.

Of the 23 modern-era quarterbacks in the Pro Football Hall of Fame — where Favre is certain to be enshrined in the not-too-distant future — only five played at 39, as Favre would have after his Oct. 10 birthday had he chosen to return for an 18th NFL season.

Johnny Unitas, Sonny Jurgenson and Len Dawson made it to 40. Warren Moon completed his career as a backup at 44.

Then there's George Blanda, the exception to every rule about age. He turned 39 during his last season as a starting quarterback, with the Houston Oilers in 1966. But in a five-game stretch in 1970, when he was 43, Blanda led the

## Hall of Famers at 39

Player	Year	G	Comp	Att	Pct	Yds	TD	Int	Rating
George Blanda*, Hou	1966	14	122	271	45.0	1,764	17	21	55.3
Johnny Unitas, Bal	1972	8	88	157	56.1	1,111	4	6	70.8
Sonny Jurgenson, Was	1973	14	87	145	60.0	904	6	5	77.5
Len Dawson, KC	1974	14	138	235	58.7	1,573	7	13	65.8
Warren Moon*, Min	1995	16	377	606	62.2	4,228	33	14	91.5

\* Turned 39 during season

Oakland Raiders to four wins and a tie with last-second touchdown passes or field goals. He stuck around for five seasons after, primarily as a place-kicker, before retiring at 48.

Favre is unique, not only because he started every game since he took over during the 1992 season, but because his statistics improved the past two seasons. In 2007, he posted his best quarterback rating (95.7) since 1996 and the best completion percentage of his career (66.5). He finished the regular season 356-of-535 passing for 4,155 yards and 28 touchdowns with 15 interceptions, his fewest since 2001, and the Packers reached the NFC championship game.

That wasn't enough to make him return.

Last season, Vinny Testaverde made a comeback with the Carolina Panthers and, at 44, became the oldest quarterback to win a game and second-oldest to start one. The only other quarterback in the league older than Favre was Dallas backup Brad Johnson at 39. Testaverde is a free agent; Johnson is under contract through 2009.

Moon turned 39 during the 1995 season — one of the best of his 17-year career — in which he threw for 33 touchdowns with just 14 interceptions for the Minnesota Vikings. Though he never again started all 16 games, Moon had another respectable season in 1997, when he turned 41 and threw for 25 touchdowns for the

Seattle Seahawks.

Unitas, Jurgenson and Dawson all were splitting time by 39.

Two other Hall of Fame quarterbacks who played in the NFL at the same time as Favre retired far sooner — Jim Kelly (at 36, after the 1996 season) and Troy Aikman (34, 2000). The Packers' Bart Starr, also a Hall of Famer, was 37 when he played in the last four games of the 1971 season.

Of the six Hall of Fame quarterbacks who retired at 38 — Elway, Marino, Montana, Young, Fran Tarkenton and Y.A. Tittle — only Young didn't attempt the majority of his team's passes in his final season.

John Elway led Denver past the Packers in Super Bowl XXXII. **File/Press-Gazette**



Figure 6.18: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, March 5, 2008, Special Favre Section (p. 6)

For example, the *Green Bay Press Gazette* article above contained a reference to Favre in the headline, and discussed his retirement from the Packers at the age of 38. Because of these inclusions, this article (and others like it) was deemed relevant. However, the majority of the above story outlined other great NFL quarterbacks who also retired at the same age, recounting their accomplishments as well. Therefore, the article was coded as not mainly about Favre. Table 6.1 illustrates the number of articles from each publication and whether Favre was the main topic or not.

Table 6.1: Favre as Main Topic (or not) in All Three Publications

	<i>Green Bay Press Gazette</i>		<i>New York Times</i>		<i>USA Today</i>	
# of Articles— Favre Main Topic (%)	159	75%	36	80%	15	60%
# of Articles—Favre Not Main Topic (%)	53	25%	9	20%	10	40%
Total # Articles	212		45		25	

While the *Press Gazette* clearly had the most stories about Favre, only 75% of the sample articles used Favre as the main topic. The number of articles mainly about Favre was slightly higher in the *New York Times* articles (80%), and slightly lower for the *USA Today* sample stories (60%). There are a few reasons to potentially explain this pattern. Because the Favre storyline was a popular news item during the sample period, especially in Green Bay, any Favre-related reports were likely covered in the *Press Gazette*. Even if the majority of a report was not directly about Favre, the probability of its inclusion by Favre's hometown Green Bay paper was likely much greater than for the *New York Times* or *USA Today*.

## Favre/Former QB not expected to address the media

► From A-1

presenting Brown, and Favre presenting Winters.

"We'll have two of the finest quarterbacks to ever play the game of football under one roof, maybe for the last time," Tattum said about Starr and Favre.

Interest in the banquet has increased because of the Favre-Packers impasse, and Tattum said additional security has been enlisted. The Packers Hall of Fame directors also have instituted a policy that restricts banquet patrons from requesting autographs during

### Watch for updates

Check [www.PackersNews.com](http://www.PackersNews.com) today for updates, photo galleries and video from the Packers Hall of Fame induction ceremony.

the banquet and program.

"In the past, we had lines of 20-25 people trying to get autographs and that created a bit of havoc," Tattum said.

Favre and his wife are expected to be seated at the same table with Winters and his wife. In addition to Thompson, Packers Chairman Emeritus Bob Harlan

also is scheduled to attend the banquet. Chief Executive Officer and President Mark Murphy will not attend because his father, Hugh, died Thursday in Florida.

The program includes a presentation to the Milwaukee-area man entering the Packers Fan Hall of Fame, followed by presentations to the Packers' 2007 rookie-of-the-year and most valuable player. The names of the players receiving those honors haven't been announced.

The inductees will be presented in alphabetical

order, with Brown first, then Trembl, and then Winters. A video will be shown featuring each of the inductees, who might be available to visit with fans after the banquet, Tattum said.

Aaron Popkey, the Packers manager of corporate communications, said a 3:30 p.m. news conference will include both the presenters and inductees, although Favre, Starr and Dotson won't be taking questions from the media. Popkey said the media requests are in excess of the normal number sought for a Hall of Fame news conference.

Figure 6.19: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, July 19, 2008, News (A1-2); Tony Walter

This excerpt was from an article published at the height of the deadlock between Favre and the Packers. However, for one night, both sides retracted their claws and honored former players being inducted into the Packer Hall of Fame. This was a story that received no ink in the *New York Times* or *USA Today*, and the bulk of the *Press Gazette* article was about the honorees, not Favre. However, the Favre storyline was prominent enough in the entire article that it was included in the sample.

Additionally, Favre's coverage in the *New York Times* was more extensive during his tenure with the Jets. By default, stories about the Favre-led Jets generally included him in some form. As the quarterback of this hometown team, his performance often affected the entire team, and this was reflected in many reports. In fact, more Favre stories were published after his trade to the Jets (26 articles) than before (19 articles). Prior to his trade to the Jets, the *Times* stories published on Favre were generally only those that were of national interest, such as his first retirement or the initial reports on his desire to return to the NFL.

### **A Boost for the Offense, and Team Coffers**

By RICHARD SANDOMIR  
Published: August 7, 2008

By 1 a.m. Thursday, after news of their trade for [Brett Favre, the Jets](#) were well into launching e-mail messages to thousands of season-ticket holders, telling them that "Favre Is a Jet" and inviting them to spend \$79.99 on his No. 4 replica jersey.

**Figure 6.20: *New York Times*, August 8, 2008, Sports (D3)**

This excerpt was from an article published in the days after Favre joined the Jets. It focused on the possible monetary boost that Favre might provide to sell tickets for the new Jets stadium, in addition to other benefits Favre's presence might have for the team and surrounding area; this was not the first article that speculated on Favre's economic effects. In fact, all three publications had at least one article that referred to this invaluable "Favre factor." It was also interesting that few other sports stars seemed to have the monetary impact that was observed in response to Favre's retirement and un-retirement announcements. This was just another facet of the Favre saga that made him a worthwhile subject of study.

Finally, the percentage of *USA Today* stories that used Favre as the main topic may be explained by simply reiterating that this publication is well-known for its

sports coverage, in addition to being a newspaper focused towards a large, general, nationally-based audience. It was very likely that the majority of stories published by *USA Today* were of interest to the general public because they updated and informed exclusively on the Favre situation, in addition to including relevant references to Favre that would assist their readers in understanding stories that included Favre and other famous figures.



## CHAPTER 7: ARTICLE LENGTH, NEWSPAPER SECTION, AND AUTHOR

### Article Length

Article length was tracked differently between the regional and national publications due to the sampling process. Both the *New York Times* and *USA Today* sample articles were obtained using LexisNexis, which provided the word count for each story. The *Green Bay Press Gazette* articles were obtained from microfilm; a word count was not an easily employable option for this collection method. However, summaries for most of the *Press Gazette* articles were found in the online archives at the *Press Gazette* website (Green Bay Press Gazette, 2009); these included word counts. Because not every article was found using this method, an average was calculated from the available data. The average article length (in words), and longest and shortest articles are presented in Table 7.1.

**Table 7.1: Article Length for All Three Publications (in words)**

	<i>Green Bay Press Gazette</i>	<i>New York Times</i>	<i>USA Today</i>
Average article length	637	780	552
Average article length*	629	755	441
Longest Article	1751	1428	1759
Longest Article*	1622	1299	1478
Shortest Article	53	160	98
Shortest Article*	53	160	98

\*Indicates Favre as main topic; not all articles were solely about Favre; however, if Favre was at least a key topic or important reference, the article was included in the sample.

Though it seemed unusual that the *Green Bay Press Gazette* would not have the longest articles on Favre, this made sense upon closer scrutiny.

# Media requests up for training camp

BY TONY WALTER

twalter@greenbaypressgazette.com

The opening of the Green Bay Packers 2008 training camp is drawing a lot of national media attention because of the team's quarterback situation.

At least a dozen national television, online and print reporters have made credential requests to cover the first day of practice Monday, likely anticipating a possible resolution to the Brett Favre story or the beginning of the Aaron Rodgers era,

according to Jeff Blumb, director of public relations.

"Some are saying they may come depending on what happens in the next couple days," Blumb said. "But this is an anomaly, an unusually high number for one day."

## Training camp special section

Visit [www.PackersNews.com](http://www.PackersNews.com) for our special training camp section, including stories, analysis, video, chats and the debut of Tom Pelissero's podcast.

Figure 7.1: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, July 26, 2008, News (A2)

Often, the *Press Gazette* deemed even the tiniest shred of Favre-related news relevant enough for publication, and these short articles likely skewed the averages. The above excerpt, for example, noted the peculiar interest of the national media regarding the Packers 2008 summer training camp. Because a resolution of the Favre situation was imminent, the press likely did not want to miss an opportunity to get the latest scoop on this relevant story.

The *Times* generally printed longer, more nationally relevant articles on Favre, which gave them the length advantage in the analysis. This also could have resulted, at least in part, from the extended coverage of Favre after he joined the Jets. The *USA Today* articles used just enough words to convey the relevant Favre news, and thus were the shortest of the three newspapers.

## Authors

### *Green Bay Press Gazette*

Multiple authors from each of the three publications covered the Favre story. Of 39 contributors to the *Press Gazette* sample articles, five authors (including credit to "GBPG") were responsible for nearly 70% of the sample articles. Interestingly, the three authors who contributed most heavily to the Favre-related stories showed different frame preferences to convey their stories.

Pete Dougherty was responsible for 30 of the *Press Gazette's* sample articles (14% of Favre sample stories). This was not surprising, since Dougherty's job title is "Reporter—Green Bay Packers" (Press Gazette Website, 2010). Though he used a variety of frames in his coverage, his use of the "Moving forward" frame was far more gratuitous than the others. Again, this frame outlined options for both Favre and the Packers amidst the confusion and uncertainty brought about by Favre's desire to un-retire and rejoin the Packers. Speculation on these options was also evident in articles that used this frame.

**Favre to petition NFL**

He'll ask for reinstatement to force the Packers' hand

BY PETE DOUGHERTY  
pdougher@greenbaypressgazette.com

Brett Favre is ready to make the next move in his face down with the Green Bay Packers and petition NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell for reinstatement to the team's roster, which would leave the next move in the Packers' hands.

Though Favre hasn't filed his official retirement papers with the league, he is on the Packers' reserve/retired list,

**More inside, online**

- Ryan Grant's agent remains hopeful a long-term deal will get done before training camp opens, C-2
- Visit [www.PackersNews.com](http://www.PackersNews.com) for complete coverage of the Favre retirement saga, including the latest developments, video and fan reaction.

and by NFL rules, has to ask the commissioner in writing for reinstatement to the team.

A source close to Favre said he is going to petition the league, and though he didn't say when, the assumption is it will be sooner rather than later so

Favre can be traded to a new team before training camp.

"He's going to write the letter to the commissioner," the source said. "We'll see what happens from there, I guess."

In an interview on Fox News with Greta Van Sust

teren on Tuesday night, Favre never addressed the reinstatement letter, but said he's certain he wants to play football this year, though he doesn't know if circumstances will work out for him to play.

The 12-minute segment — the second of an interview that was taped Monday — also more starkly revealed the widening rift between Favre and team management since Favre has become more adamant in the past three to four weeks that he wants to return for another season after announcing his retirement in March. The growing animosity will make it especially hard for Favre to return to the team.

► See Favre, C-4

Figure 7.2: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, July 16, 2008, Sports (A1, C1,4)

The above excerpt was from an article by Dougherty, common to both his writing on Favre as well as the *Press Gazette* coverage overall. This particular article covered both Favre's options and possible resolutions the Packers could implement. Dougherty also outlined the events leading up to the improbable standoff between Favre and the Packers.

Mike Vandermause, *Press Gazette* Sports Editor, was another main contributor to the Favre sample stories; he wrote 27 articles, which made up nearly 13% of the Favre sample. Vandermause's coverage suggested that the Favre story was a major news topic, since his Favre stories likely appeared in the *Press Gazette* at the expense of other potential sports topics. Vandermause had almost as many Favre-related articles as Dougherty, whose main job was to cover the Packers.

Unlike Dougherty, however, Vandermause primarily utilized the "Judgment" frame.

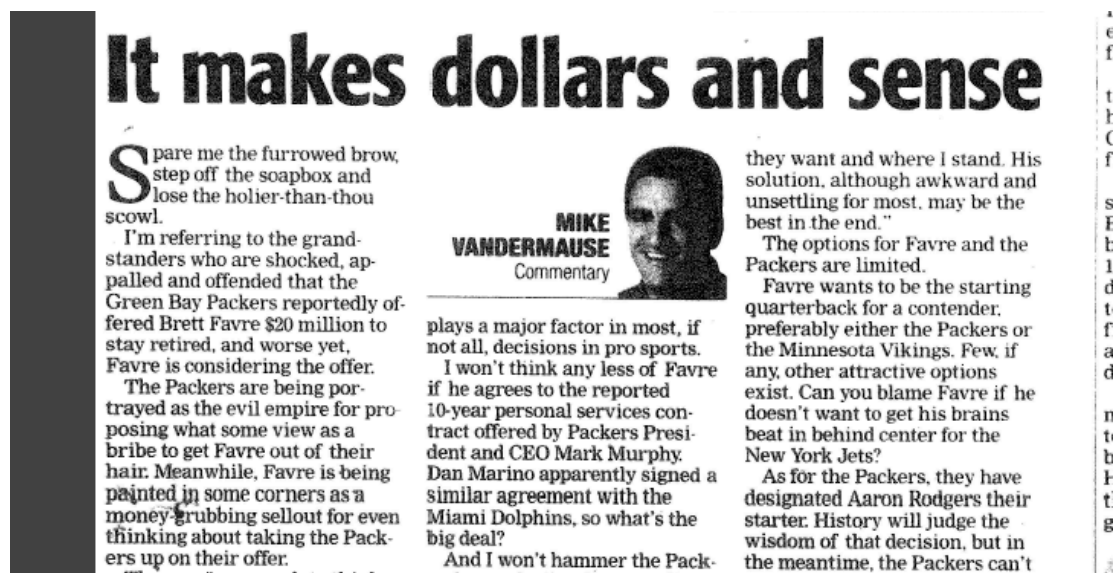


Figure 7.3: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, August 2, 2008, Sports (C1)

In the above excerpt, Vandermause sought to silence the critics who were outraged when the Packers offered Favre millions of dollars in the form of a personal services contract with the Packers. The Packers floated this solution as a way of ensuring that Favre remain a retired, lifelong Green Bay Packer. In Vandermause's opinion, this was a suitable agreement for both parties. In the end, this obviously was not a solution both sides could agree on.

Finally, Tom Pelissero, the *Press Gazette* Assistant Sports Editor, contributed 26 articles (roughly 12% of the sample articles) on the Favre storyline. Similar to Dougherty and Vandermause, Pelissero used numerous different frames to cover the story. However, no one frame stood out as characteristic of Pelissero's writing on the Favre story.

## Driver: 'You have to move on'

BY TOM PELISSERO

tpelisser@greenbaypressgazette.com

Four days after Brett Favre's retirement became public, the quarterback's favorite receiver for most of the past six years said he isn't sure what to expect without No. 4, on the field or in the locker room.

"I don't know if I'm ready for it, and I don't know how it's going to be," receiver Donald Driver said Saturday during a media conference at the Green Bay Packers' Fan Fest event. "Just walking in here for our first minicamp and he's not in here, and then walking in for training camp and you don't see that guy sitting four rows over from you, you're like, 'Wow.' And then, when you line up on the line, you look back on the side of you and he's not under that center. I think it's going to be more emotional for guys that have played with him so long than anything else.

"But we'll look over and see — you don't see (No.) 4, you'll see (No.) 12 (Aaron Rodgers). And I think at that point, we've just all got to say, 'Hey, the ghost is still there. The legend will still be here, regardless of



Kristy Sloviak of Cadott said she hardly could contain her excitement while getting her jersey signed by quarterback Aaron Rodgers during Fan Fest in the Lambeau Field Atrium. **Corey Wilson/Press-Gazette**



Rodgers motions near an informal tally he was taking from the pub-

### Photo gallery online

► For more photos from Fan Fest, click on this story at [www.PackersNews.com](http://www.PackersNews.com)



the news broke Tuesday. "Donald Driver's (message) definitely meant a lot to me, because he's played with Brett

"Guess what?" Wolf said. "He played 16 (seasons)."

**Hear no evil:** General Manager Ted Thompson said he sat in the dark, alone and silent, for about an hour after coach Mike McCarthy called him Monday night to say Favre was retiring.

Asked during a Fan Fest question-and-answer session on Saturday whether it hurt that some blamed him or the organization for Favre's decision, Thompson said, "a little bit, because it wasn't true and I knew it would cause people — the fans out there — to question. We're not an ego-driven place."

He added: "I don't necessarily get upset if someone's offended by me or doesn't like the way I talk or maybe I make a decision, or we make a decision as an organization, and they disagree. That's OK. But if things are taken out of context and they think there's some sort of evilness going on here, when in fact we're just people trying to do the right thing, then I think things get a little skewed."

**Hot stuff:** Favre was known for playing practical jokes in his career, including dumping buckets of ice water on teammates over the walls of bath-

**Figure 7.4: Green Bay Press Gazette, March 8, 2009, Sports (C2)**

This particular story used the "Celebration/Remembrance" frame and discussed Favre's retirement from the point of view of Packer players, management, and others. Favre's little-known medical condition was discussed by former Packers' General Manager Ron Wolf; apparently some of the doctors were so concerned about an undisclosed hip problem discovered when Favre underwent his Packers-required physical that they wanted to send him back to Atlanta. However,

Favre was allowed to stay, and his hip seemed to be a non-issue for his entire tenure with the Packers.

### ***New York Times***

Fourteen different authors contributed to the Favre sample stories published by the *New York Times*. Two of these authors each accounted for 20% of these articles.

Judy Battista, the *New York Times* NFL contributor (Judy Battista Twitter Page, 2009), wrote nine stories on the Favre saga. Battista used a variety of frames in her coverage, though she doubled up on the “remarriage” frame, using it to structure two different Favre stories.

## A Town Is as Divided as Favre and the Packers

By JUDY BATTISTA  
Published: July 18, 2008

[GREEN BAY](#), Wis. — A sign near the front door of [Brett Favre's](#) Steakhouse here reads “Thanks, Boss 4 a great career.” All of the blocky white letters are neatly aligned, reflecting none of the chaos that has consumed this town for the past few weeks.



Jonathan Daniel/Getty Images  
Brett Favre retired in March but wants to be released to play elsewhere.

This community has been in Favre's thrall since he arrived 16 years ago, his 100,000 neighbors here riding the highs and lows of his career and his life. When Favre retired in March, even City Hall stopped to listen to the tearful goodbye. A local radio station played a dirge, fitting for a place that felt as if this particular ending should be mourned.

But, as with most families, the relatives sometimes get on one another's nerves. And Favre, with his stunning request last week for release from the franchise because he wants to play again and does not feel welcomed by the Packers, is now driving crazy many of those who love him the most.

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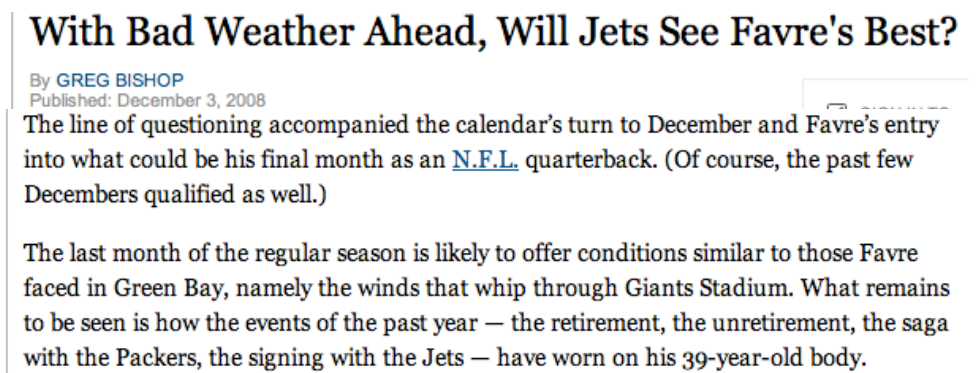


**Figure 7.5: *New York Times*, July 18, 2008, Sports (D1)**

The excerpt above was framed using “Judgment,” one of the more popular frames used by the *Times*. It was noteworthy that this article quoted Green Bay residents and Packer fans, the only *Times* article that used these sources. It was not

necessarily Battista making the judgments, but rather the quoted sources. Interestingly, in the article Battista noted “the reluctance of many people to publicly criticize Favre for fear of the small-town backlash that may ensue,” (Battista, 2008b). This somewhat spoke to the idea of structural pluralism, though Donohue, Olien, and Tichenor (1985) looked at reported conflict in newspaper coverage, not at how a reporter perceived the values of the region in which she was reporting. Additionally, many local residents and fans *were* highly critical of Favre’s decision to un-retire; perhaps Battista’s observation was the reluctance of her sources to discuss the situation with an ‘outsider’.

Greg Bishop also contributed nine stories on Favre during the sample period. Bishop covers sports (and more specifically, the New York Jets) for the *Times* (Greg Bishop Twitter Page, 2009); it was not surprising that Bishop used the frame “Remarriage/Brett the Jet” in one third of his sample stories, since Favre was clearly an important addition to the Jets.



**Figure 7.6: *New York Times*, December 4, 2008, Sports (B19)**

The excerpt above was Bishop’s only sample story that questioned Favre’s ability to continue to execute at a high level in the chilly, severe New York winter conditions. In Green Bay, Favre generally excelled when the weather cooled down.

Though Favre showed flashes of his previous brilliance for the Jets, his hot streak did not continue into a cold, New York December. This was not one of the more popular frames or topics for the *Times*, but Favre's durability was one admired facet of his storied career. The fact that the Jets were not on the receiving end of his poor weather-related heroics was a sore spot at the end of the season.

### ***USA Today***

Skip Wood, an NFL reporter for *USA Today*, wrote five sample articles about the Favre situation (20% of all stories), the most of any of the publication's journalists. The frames "Moving forward" and "Divorce" were twice used, and the "Remarriage" frame was also utilized once.

#### **Favre's encore all but over**

Exit at Lambeau stokes talk of trade to Bucs

By Skip Wood  
USA TODAY

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Stopping just short of declaring quarterback Brett Favre had played his last game with the Green Bay Packers, coach Mike McCarthy said Tuesday that he had serious doubts about a reunion.

He added that while he understood Favre's frustration, he sensed palpable resentment toward the Packers during a five-hour meeting Monday.

"Given his mind-set," said McCarthy, who had plans to meet with Favre later Tuesday night, "why would I let anybody of a negative mind-set in our locker room? ... He's in a place right now where he has to make decisions for himself.

"The train has left the station. ... He needs to jump on the train and let's go. ... I need to keep the train moving."

The *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, citing a person familiar with the situation, said Favre was considering a possible trade to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

**Figure 7.7: *New York Times*, August 6, 2008, Sports (1C)**

According to this excerpt, Favre's likely landing place after leaving the Packers was with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. *USA Today* cited a *Press Gazette* report for providing this information. However, during the same time period, the *Times* created buzz about Favre and suggested that he may play in New York. That was exactly what happened.



## Section of Newspaper

### *Green Bay Press Gazette*

The *Green Bay Press Gazette* published sample articles in multiple sections of the newspaper. Not surprisingly, the sports section is where the majority of Favre-related sample articles were found (44%).



Figure 7.8: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, March 7, 2008, Sports (C1-2)

The above excerpt was published on the front page of the sports section, along with many other Favre-related milestones throughout the sample period.

Despite the commonsensical location of many Favre articles in the sports section, 35% of the sample articles originated in the News section (section A) which included the front page.



Figure 7.9: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, March 7, 2008, News (A1-2); Pete Dougherty

The excerpt above took up the entire front page of the *Press Gazette*. The article outlined Favre's official retirement press conference in Green Bay, during which he could not keep his emotions in check as he detailed his 16 years with the Packers. (Favre's first retirement received front-page sports coverage in both national publications).

However, the above locations were not the only *Press Gazette* places for Favre-related sample articles. The business and lifestyle sections also offered articles about Favre.



Figure 7.10: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, July 17, 2008, Lifestyle (D1)

For example, this article from the Lifestyle section outlined the perspective of an oft-overlooked group of football fans—mothers. While residents, fans, players, and the rest of the NFL community grew tired of the ongoing drama between Favre and the Packers, mothers specifically offered their opinions for this article. Most noted that they were sick of the Favre drama.

Other articles capitalized on the somewhat fortuitous timing of Favre's return to the NFL.

## This 'Favre' story bites into the Big Apple

**WARREN GERDS**  
Commentary

Adding to the supply of twists to the saga of Brett Favre comes "I Love You, Petty, & Favre," a play premiering Friday in New York City. Favre is a character in the play in name only. Brett, however, is a character — female.

The catchy title is serving the production well. Twelve days before the New York International Fringe Festival — FringeNYC, writer-producer David Scott reported his play was tops in ticket sales among the 200 entries.

Scott is native of West Bend, "where he learned how to bleed Green & Gold," his program bio reads. He's a graduate of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and has since gone on to medical school.

Scott chatted about "I Love You, Petty, & Favre" through an e-mail.

"The play is a love story and also has a very big family theme, as the play spans 25 years," he said. "When the two main characters, Brett and Brian, meet in high school, it is about 1992-1993, when Favre has just taken over as quarterback."

"Brian is an obsessed Packers fan, so much so that when he learns that the cute girl sitting next to him is named 'Brett,' he falls for her all the more."

The "Petty" of the title is not one of the racecar drivers but musician Tom Petty. Brett has a name Brian likes, and Brian has something Brett likes — Tom Petty tickets.

The actor playing Brian at an older age is Jason Denuszek, another Wisconsinite "bred and born a Green Bay Packers fan."

"There is Packers gear in practically every scene," Scott said. "The main scene is when Brian takes his 5-year-old son and 7-year-old daughter to their first Packers game. They are decked out in cheeseheads and everything else you can imagine."

"When Brian tries to explain what makes Favre so great by reciting his numerous records, the kids just stare at him blankly. He then says, 'Brett Favre is like Santa Claus, the Teletubbies and Superman all combined into one.' The kids understand."

For a Halloween scene, the grandfather dresses up as Vince Lombardi.

For the wedding scene, Brian and Brett have written their vows. "One of Brett's is, 'I promise to be your shoulder to cry on when Brett Favre retires from football,'" Scott said.

"We are currently in talks with both the Milwaukee and Madison Rep about bringing the show there, although nothing has been finalized," Scott said. "I would obviously love to see it shown in Wisconsin."

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Philip Marion and Jennifer Kipley, as the character Brett, rehearse a scene for "I Love You, Petty, & Favre," an entry in the New York International Fringe Festival — FringeNYC. **Submitted photo**

Figure 7.11: Green Bay Press Gazette, August 3, 2008, Lifestyle (D1)

The above story chronicled a Wisconsin native who wrote a Packers-related play in which two of the characters were named Brett and Favre. During a marriage ceremony between two other characters in the play, wedding vows were exchanged. One member of the couple stated, 'I promise to be your shoulder to cry on when Brett Favre retires from football.' The play was set to premiere in New York around the same time that Favre was traded to the Jets.

## ***New York Times***

In contrast to the variety of locations for Favre sample articles in the *Green Bay Press Gazette*, both national publications confined the majority of sample articles to their respective Sports sections. In fact, every sample article from the *Times* was published in the Sports section. Certain events of national interest, such as Favre's first retirement, received front-page attention from the *Times'* sports section. Others, such as key wins in Favre's tenure with the Jets were also deemed worthy for the first page of the section. However, other Favre news was relegated to later pages of the section, such as poor performances by the Jets and even Favre's second retirement.

### **No Tears This Time, Favre Says So Long**

By GREG BISHOP  
Published: February 11, 2009

This time, when [Brett Favre](#) decided to ride off on his lawnmower in Mississippi and spend his days in retirement targeting deer instead of receivers, it felt final.

The team welcomed Favre for a second season, but Favre said no — then, after the season during [Super Bowl](#) week and now.

He arrived in New York to frenzied fanfare. He was welcomed by local politicians and watched by more than 10,000 loyalists at his first practice. His coach, [Eric Mangini](#), gave his third son the middle name Brett.

Favre made the Jets relevant again, even before he led them to stunning victories at New England and Tennessee, wins that seemed to make them a bona fide contender for the American Football Conference title.

"Through the first 11 games, it looked pretty good," Johnson said Wednesday.

Of course, the collapse came next. Favre sustained the injury, and the Jets lost four of their last five games, a stretch in which Favre threw nine interceptions. Teammates criticized Favre after the season ended, on his way out, sometimes anonymously.

**Figure 7.12: *New York Times*, February 12, 2009, Sports (B13)**

This excerpt outlined Favre's second, and purportedly, final retirement. His season with the Jets ended on a disappointing note, as the team missed the playoffs and Favre blamed injuries for his poor late-season performance. Favre even received criticism from some of his New York teammates in the wake of his departure, though he was invited back by the Jets before announcing his retirement.

## ***USA Today***

All but one sample article was included in the sports section of *USA Today* (see Figure 4.18 for an excerpt of the article). The lone article was published in the News section and was largely about the Democratic National Convention. In passing, it compared Bill and Hillary Clinton to Favre because of their bouts of indecision. Similar to the *New York Times* treatment, *USA Today* gave front-page sports section coverage to many of Favre's milestones, including his first and second retirements, as well as a handful of stories regarding the events leading up to Favre's trade to the New York Jets. Other sample stories were scattered throughout the later pages of the Sports section.

## ***Collective thoughts on Section in All Three Publications***

It was not surprising that Favre-related news in the *Press Gazette* received more coverage and in more varied locations than the national publications. News on Favre affected far more than sports in Green Bay—marketing, ticket sales, merchandise and memorabilia purchases, among others, were all influenced by news on Favre. From the first game Favre stepped in for injured quarterback Don Majikowski, a new Packers era was apparent. Favre won games, and did so in an exciting, awe-inspiring manner. Under his command, the Packers quickly became associated with winning, and his following assembled quickly and en masse. Favre became enmeshed with Packer nation, an indispensable, messiah-like part of its culture and identity. These spiritual undertones were evident from the very beginning of Favre's tenure with the Packers and made it understandable that the hometown *Press Gazette* covered all aspects of Favre's career and personal life.

Despite Favre's move to the Jets, sample articles from the *Times* still focused largely on Favre's sports-related accomplishments, though his economic effects were noted as well. *USA Today* followed suit, and devoted their Favre coverage to his athletic performance. As two publications that were decidedly on the outside of Packer culture, it was not surprising that Favre's football feats were the most salient topics for newspaper articles.

## CHAPTER 8: OTHER NOTABLE INCLUSIONS

The study was somewhat complicated by the fact that Favre's move to New York likely increased his coverage in the *New York Times*. It was impossible to determine how the saga might have been covered had Favre been traded to the Buccaneers (once deemed a potential trade partner for the Packers and Favre) or another team with no apparent ties to the New York area.

However, Favre's close ties to both Green Bay and New York at different points in the sample period likely contributed to the varied, unique coverage the *Green Bay Press Gazette* and *New York Times* offered. Below are some examples of unique coverage of the Favre story by both publications that were not previously outlined.

### No. 4's legacy just beginning for twin baby boys

Proud parents welcome to family sons Brett and Favre

BY PATTI ZARLING  
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It may be the end of the Brett Favre era in Tittletown, but for Brett and Favre Kinsaul of Palatka, Fla., life has just begun.

The twins' parents, David and Emily Kinsaul, agreed when they married that they would name any sons after the legendary Packers' quarterback. But they didn't know they'd have twin boys the first time around. Or that Favre would retire days after their birth.

"I was hoping we'd have at least one year of him still playing," David Kinsaul said. The twins were born Feb. 22. The Packers confirmed Favre's retirement Tuesday.

"The last couple years it's come up year after year, but this year everyone seemed to think he'd come back."

Not that his retirement would have changed the Kinsauls' plans to name any boys after David's hero.

"Oh no, they'd still be named after him," he said.

Kinsaul is a relatively new member of the Favre fan club.

He grew up in Florida and moved to Madison in about 2000. He lived in Wisconsin for about three and a half years, and during that time didn't consider himself much of a Packers fan. But when he moved to Houston, and then back to Florida in 2005, he discovered he had some green and gold in his blood after all.

"I missed it terribly," he said. "There's a whole culture up there, watching the games and being interested in the Packers. I just really missed it."

"And I loved watching Brett play. You could just really tell he loved the game, and he was fun to watch."

Kinsaul and his wife subscribed to satellite TV so they could watch Packers games, and he started reading about the history of the Packers and Lambeau Field. When he and his wife discussed marriage, they agreed on the names Brett and Favre for boys. His wife isn't a super fan, but adopted the Packers because of him, Kinsaul said.

So when they found out they were expecting twins, the names were set. Brett Aaron was born at 7:55 a.m.; Favre Moses made his entrance at 7:56 a.m.

The names weren't revealed to friends and family until the boys were born, Kinsaul said.

"They were a little surprised," he said. "They really liked the name Brett. They weren't so sure about Favre."

"They didn't have a problem with Favre personally, they just weren't sure about that for a name. But now it's grown on him."

Kinsaul made sure Favre's name is correctly spelled on the birth certificate and insurance papers. He hopes someday his sons might be football players like Favre.

Kinsaul never made it to Lambeau Field during his time in Wisconsin, but intends to bring the boys for a visit to the Packers' holy ground when they're older. And he plans to tell them plenty about their namesake.

"Brett is just so excellent at what he does, and yet he's extremely human," Kinsaul said. "He's had so many things he's gone through personally and he's still gone so far."

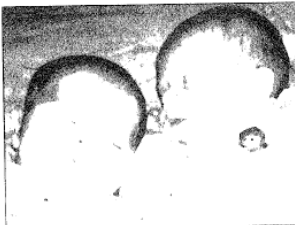


Figure 8.1: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, March 5, 2008, Special Favre Section (p. 7)

The above article noted that a Florida couple paid tribute to the Packer legend, naming their twin sons Brett and Favre in honor of the quarterback. Though neither of the couple was from Wisconsin, the husband had lived there and found that he missed the camaraderie of Packers football after moving to Florida. Favre inspired other comparisons as well, however.

## **SPORTS OF THE TIMES; Sharing A Stadium, But Not A Spotlight**

By HARVEY ARATON  
Published: September 12, 2008

☒ SIGN IN TO

Looking at it that way, the Giants should be rooting for the Jets to extend the Patriots' losing streak against New York-area teams to two Sunday, and to continue rolling from there. Because as long as the Jets are contending and the Giants aren't collapsing, Favre will draw the big news media meanies, especially on Wednesdays, which in the regimented world of pro football is the day the starting quarterback speaks.

Can you blame us for going where the quarterback doesn't practice word conservation? According to transcripts posted on the teams' respective Web sites, Favre fielded 13 questions Wednesday and uttered 2,278 words, compared with Manning's 7 responses for 487. Favre's answers stretched to a high of 346 words while none of Manning's got past 90.

**Figure 8.2: *New York Times*, September 12, 2008, Sports (D1)**

This excerpt and the rest of the article compared the New York Jets to their neighbors and stadium-sharing partners, the New York Giants. Despite being the reigning Super Bowl champions, the article noted the Giants were a somewhat boring team next to the Favre-led Jets. In fact, the number of words Favre spoke in response to 13 questions at a recent press conference (2,278 words) was contrasted with Giant's QB Eli Manning (7 answers for 487 words). The author explained that with that type of material, the media could not be blamed for focusing on the Jets. Without Favre, there would have likely been much less interest in covering the unproven Jets.



# Favre street hits a roadblock

Schmitt surprised by quarterback's trade to New York

BY PAUL SRUBAS  
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A plan to name a major street in Green Bay after Brett Favre hit the skids this week when the retired quarterback was traded to the New York Jets.

But it still could happen, Green Bay Mayor Jim Schmitt said Thursday.

"Even if he plays a few

more years, he'll be remembered as a Packers," Schmitt said. "Not everybody agrees with that, based on the phone calls I've gotten ... but when he retires and goes into the Hall of Fame as a Packer, this community will want to do something special for that, and I'll support that."

"He needs to be honored," Schmitt said. "He's given a lot to the community."

Schmitt first pitched the idea in April at his State of the City address. He proposed renaming a major

thoroughfare after Favre. He said he favored a major road that crossed several municipalities and tied into the stadium district and downtown.

"Ashland (Avenue) is a good candidate, but I'd like Brett Favre Boulevard to be an upgraded, first-class thoroughfare," Schmitt said last spring.

Other possibilities were Velp and Military avenues, both of which are scheduled for reconstruction. But Schmitt said he'd be reluctant to tamper with Military's name.

Last spring, Schmitt

said he was confident Favre wouldn't sign with another team upon retirement, though the city still likely would honor him even if he did.

Schmitt admitted this week he was surprised Favre went to the Jets, and he said he realized fans are still smarting too much to want to deal with renaming a road after Favre.

But the sting will wear off, Schmitt said.

"I think it's best we put that project on hold. I want to see something done, but not right now."

Figure 8.3: Green Bay Press Gazette, August 8, 2008, News (A2)

Interest in Favre seemed to shift, as this article noted. While the Green Bay community, including the mayor, agreed that Favre deserved recognition for his accomplishments, his trade to the Jets presented a conundrum. Many fans were shocked and some disappointed by the news of Favre's new team. Though the mayor remained steadfast in his determination to rename a major Green Bay street after Favre, these plans are still on hold.

## CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

### Conclusions

This was a complex exploratory study, made especially interesting by the fact that this type of coverage of an athlete was unprecedented in the academic literature. The study presented many unique results related to framing theory and structural pluralism, as well as the ritualistic, religious nature of sports. Previous research indicated that regional and national newspapers might frame stories differently, as well as how conflict might be reported by the publications.

The fan following that Favre amassed, and the leadership role he assumed both on the field and in the community, made him a revered figure in Green Bay and in the sports world. While the literature was replete with studies on sports and religion, the near-fanatical media treatment Favre attracted during the sample period was unprecedented. It was not surprising, then, that there was an absence of academic work in this area; no previous studies indicated how the Favre storyline might be framed.

However, the sheer volume of sample stories and comprehensive nature of the coverage published by the *Green Bay Press Gazette* were evidence of the special bond between Favre, the Green Bay Packers, and the surrounding community. Additionally, the intense interest in this storyline by the media in general was unlike that of any other athlete's career and retirement. The improbability of the entire

sequence of events that colored the time from Favre's first to second retirements made this a salient story at both the regional and national levels.

Because of the national interest in the entire saga, certain framing similarities were observed in the coverage by the *Press Gazette*, *New York Times*, and *USA Today*; there were often limited ways to meaningfully structure the storyline. For example, during the uncertain summer when Favre's return was undecided, all three publications used the frame + theme combination of "Moving forward" and "Uncertain future for Favre." The lack of tangible, credible information provided few other ways for any of the publications to present articles at this time.

However, there were obvious differences in many instances as well. The *Press Gazette* found unique angles for stories even during slow news times. This likely resulted from the proximity to Favre, both physically and sentimentally, as well as regional reader interest in Favre that demanded information about him, even if the news did nothing to dispel the uncertainty surrounding him at the time.

The break up between Favre and the Packers was also a salient news story for the *Press Gazette*, *Times*, and *USA Today*, but again, differences were observed in the framing of this event. Although this facet of the saga could have simply been classified by the term "Split", it was believed that "Divorce" and "Remarriage" frames would better categorize these stories about the end of the professional relationship between Favre and the Packers. Interestingly, *USA Today* more commonly focused on the "Divorce" aspect of the break-up, while the *Press Gazette* and *New York Times* chose the "Remarriage" frame to structure more stories during this tumultuous time.

However, the “Remarriage” frame also included updates on the results of Favre’s new marriage to the Jets: reactions to his new home, his milestones with the Jets, and updates on his performances were all under the “Remarriage” umbrella. Paring this frame down would have likely provided a more accurate picture of how the three newspapers collectively used the “Divorce” and “Remarriage” frames in the Favre articles, and how the *Times* more specifically covered the events at this time.

In any case, the conflict-laden split between Favre and the Packers was highlighted by all three publications, though the reporting of conflict alone did not appear to entirely support or dismiss structural pluralism in this study. All three papers’ sample stories had more conflict than not, though this ratio was nearly even for the *Press Gazette* and *Times*. *USA Today* was more definite, as its stories with conflict clearly outweighed those without. Because the entire Favre story had innate conflict, it was very likely that all three publications were simply reporting what was in front of them.

When the categories for conflict and tone were observed together, a more complete picture emerged. Overall, the *Press Gazette* had far more positive articles than both national publications, suggesting that despite the inherent conflict, the regional newspaper still found ways to highlight encouraging aspects of Favre and the entire situation. However, a positive tone was much more prominent in the articles without conflict for the *Press Gazette*. In its stories that did contain conflict, a neutral or negative tone was more often observed, suggesting that even the *Press*

*Gazette* was inclined to present Favre in an unfavorable light, despite his local ties and contributions to the Green Bay Packers and surrounding community.

Perhaps in stories with inherent conflict, structural pluralism does not apply. It is also possible that a combination of the presence of innate conflict and the tone of coverage should be observed as a more accurate indicator of whether structural pluralism could be at play. Additionally, the context in which conflict is presented may also indicate whether structural pluralism holds in this type of study. However, this finding is not unsupported in the literature. Mikelson's (2007) work on the contentious Idaho wolf reintroduction did not present evidence that smaller communities avoided reporting conflict either.

Despite the conflict surrounding him, the influence Favre exerted in the Green Bay community was evident in the location of sample articles within the *Press Gazette*. While the national publications expectedly published Favre-related articles in the Sports section, the *Press Gazette* was more varied. The sports page was a common location for Favre items, but the News, Business, and Lifestyle sections also played host to Favre-related articles. Favre's immense reach in the Green Bay community extended far beyond athletics and was deemed important enough to warrant reporting in many other areas.

While the intimacy Green Bay shared with Favre made him the key player in the majority of *Press Gazette* coverage, both the *Times* and *USA Today* capitalized on his renown to make stories about other famous figures more relevant. Both national publications referenced Favre in the context of other celebrities and their retirements or bouts of indecision, from sports to politics. Clearly the Favre story

was so widely publicized that its reference helped readers understand others in a position similar to Favre's.

While both Favre and the Packer management were expectedly the most popular sources for information in all three publications, differences were observed between the *Press Gazette* and the *Times* and *USA Today* in this area as well. The *Press Gazette* most often cited Favre's friends, family, and other sources close to Favre; this group was likely very familiar to *Press Gazette* readers. In contrast, the national papers were more apt to provide input on the Favre saga from NFL players, coaches, and retirees, a group of sources that likely appealed to a broader national audience.

Differences in article length also seemed related to the *Press Gazette's* close ties with Favre. Almost any information related to Favre was deemed newsworthy, likely because of the insatiable desire for Favre news in the community. From his effect on ticket sales to an automated projection for the Packers record in a Favre-less season, the quarterback was relevant. The fact that both the *Press Gazette* and *Times* claimed Favre as a hometown boy during part of the sample period was the likely explanation for *USA Today* having the shortest average article length.

However, only Favre's Green Bay hometown publication framed stories in a way that characterized what was so extraordinary about Favre. The ritualistic, religious undertones alluded to by the *Press Gazette* truly embodied Favre's relationship with the Green Bay Packers and surrounding community and suggested Favre's significant cultural impact. In addition to Favre's well-publicized athletic heroics, his selfless good deeds in the community were also celebrated. The area's

desire to honor Favre by renaming roads, passing legislative bills for remembrance of his accomplishments, and embracing the memories of the green and gold Favre long after he was gone, all pointed towards Favre's lasting legacy in Green Bay.

Despite his somewhat unceremonious departure from Green Bay, Favre will always be synonymous with the winningest era in Packer football history. Perhaps he will also always be inextricably tied to his own indecision. As Taylor & Ogilvie (1994) noted, "retirement is a significant and widespread problem for athletes today," (p.1). Perhaps no one is more of a poster boy for the truth of this statement than Favre himself. There was no denying, however, that despite some unfavorable *Press Gazette* articles on Favre, his true hometown newspaper demonstrated that any day of the week was the perfect day to celebrate Favre. But perhaps the day that most Packers fans will let their thoughts stray a little longer on his implausible NFL career, his successes on and off the field, and his absence, is Sunday—the day of rest. And of course, the day of football.

### **Limitations and Future Study**

This was an extensive study with numerous considerations, some of which were likely beyond the scope of the researcher's capabilities. While every attempt was made to be systematic, thorough, and methodical, there are likely areas where inaccuracies exist because of the emergent nature of the study and the closeness of the researcher to all aspects of the analysis and the subject matter itself.

Besides the potential for error in the actual research, an obvious limitation of the study was the small number of sample articles for both national publications.

However, these articles comprised the entire body of coverage for each newspaper, so it was a representative sample of what was available at the time.

Another possible issue was the pseudo-hometown nature of the *New York Times* during Favre's season with the Jets. While it was still very much a nationally focused publication, the Jets were a hometown team, and the *Times* likely gave more coverage to Favre than if he had been traded outside the New York region. This could have skewed the results, though the inside look at Favre's post-Packers professional career arguably added an element of richness to the story that otherwise would have been lost had one of the sample papers not had a vested interest in Favre's athletic performance. Additionally, *USA Today* was a 'neutral' publication that had no hometown loyalty to Favre, offering a baseline for comparison with the *Times*.

Additionally, the inherent conflict presented in the storyline from Favre's first retirement to his second may have complicated the ability to determine whether structural pluralism held within the constraints of this study. Because of the nature of the story, often presentations of conflict were the only way to accurately convey the story. Perhaps a combination of conflict and article tone would provide a more accurate assessment of whether structural pluralism is at play in future.

However, the early studies on structural pluralism dating from the 1960's likely scrutinized a much different contingent of newspapers than what this study entailed. Large and small newspapers during that time period likely had much different make-ups, power structures, and opinions than the present-day



publications that produced the articles analyzed by this study. Therefore, it is possible that structural pluralism does not currently have the relevance it once did and thus may not relate to this study as much as originally thought. Additionally, the publications used in this study may be more similar than the differences between them and their classifications suggest.

The context in which conflict is presented might be another consideration for future research. Against the main tenets of structural pluralism, the *Press Gazette* was not afraid to pass negative judgment on Favre; however, the newspaper still found positive ways to present Favre stories, even after his departure from Green Bay. This could have been a reflection of the intimate connection shared by Favre and the local community, or it could be indicative of the reporting preferences of regional media outlets in general. Do smaller, localized media outlets shy away from reporting conflict because they cannot distance themselves enough from the subjects on whom they report?

On the flipside of this debate, newspapers are rapidly changing as technological advances are forcing some print outlets to abandon these practices and publish solely on the Web (Alterman, 2008). While this surely is not the norm, there is the possibility of smaller papers like the *Green Bay Press Gazette* eventually closing their doors. In the process, do we risk losing an intimacy that only a smaller, regional newspaper can provide? Additionally, if regional newspapers do tend to highlight a more personal, intimate side of a story that national papers lack, do readers expect this and actively seek out these stories (via online news services) in order to fulfill their desire for this type of media?

There was a clear lack of academic literature that suggested how the media might treat a renowned sports figure of Favre's stature. More study is also warranted in the area of religious, ritualistic coverage of an athlete like Favre, as the enormous popularity that professional sports and their athletes are gaining has been noted. The scholarly scope of this phenomenon could surely extend to the reaches of other media forms, spirituality or religious research, cultural studies, and beyond. Though there may well be another athlete who garners the immense interest of the nation, there will decidedly never be another Favre.

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## APPENDIX A:

### Coding Protocol

	Key/Explanation
Newspaper	1-New York Times 2-USA Today 3-Green Bay Press Gazette
Tone	1- Positive 2- Negative 3- Neutral
Frames	1- judgment 2- rating Favre/comparisons 3- Favre as reference point for others 4- Moving forward (options for Favre, Packers; speculation on what's going on) 5- He said he said (back and forth) 6- Celebration/Remembrance of Favre 7- Favre vs. Rodgers/Comparisons and competition 8- Rumored Return 10-Mass Media coverage of Favre: "saga," games, personal life, etc. 11-Divorce 12- Remarriage/Brett the Jet (reactions, milestones, updates) 13- Favre decision on 2008 season expected soon 14- Big adjustments ahead for Favre with Jets 15- Favre's durability 18- GRB vs. NY (playing there, TV market, etc.) 19- Revenue effects from Favre: absence in Green Bay, contributions to Jets, etc. 20- Jet's future 21- Favre's charitable side 22- Favre's early career-HS and college days 23- Favre wants reinstatement and/or release
Themes	1- Favre is right and/or Packers are wrong 2- Favre is wrong and/or Packers are right 3- Favre's desire to return to GRB puts Packers in a tough spot; need to consider long-term best interests of Packers 4- Favre should stay retired; Packers entice Favre with \$\$ offer to stay retired 5- Favre is a positive reference point 6- Favre is a negative reference point 7- Rodgers can do it; give him a chance 9- Packers didn't do enough to keep Favre from retiring/Thompson & McCarthy pressured Favre to retire 10- Favre just okay, not as great as people think 11- Telephone survey solicits local opinions on Favre situation 12- Uncertain future for Favre; reinstatement questions, trade options, reporting to training camp 13- No opinion about Favre situation 14- Mixed feelings about Favre situation/mixed reactions 15- Favre/Packers breakup a milestone for the organization/end of an era 16- Drama follows Favre, often overblown by media: tampering, often excessive coverage of little story, etc. 17- Favre accuses Packers of not telling the whole truth; blames Packers and Thompson for bad decisions throughout Favre's tenure with Green Bay 18- Humble, grateful NFL star 19- Favre is a great competitor, one of the best 20- Mention of Favre with other retirees, no judgment 22- Packers/Favre—no one is to blame for an unfortunate situation 23- Revenue increases for the Jets 24- Favre has serious marketing and revenue pull; news on him affects merchandise, ticket sales, TV schedule, etc. 25- Favre media storm won't overshadow Packers Hall of Fame induction 26- Favre/Packers stalemate ensues; trade talk limited, neither side committed to action; Favre urged to stay away 27- Time will tell if Favre can be successful in NY, big adjustments ahead for Favre 29- Favre's play promising 30- Favre fans/Packer fans frustrated by Favre situation; hero fallen, no resolution in sight 31- Fitting end to Dolphins/Jets seasons for Chad Pennington 32- Favre's presence in NY takes attention off of NY Giants 33- Favre's enthusiasm for the game—he's like a child 34- Favre unimpressive, old as Jets struggle; penalties don't help 36- Fans in NY fair-weather 37- Favre's legacy will stay intact even if he plays for another team 38- Classic Favre performance/meets expectations of Jets 39- (omitted/combined with another category) 40- Buccaneers interested in Favre 41- Favre as indecisive; make up your mind, Brett!

	<p>42- Injuries spur 2<sup>nd</sup> retirement  43- shareholders seem to be behind Thompson/McCarthy's decisions on Favre  44- Favre's arm is sore  45- Weather factors into Favre's success  46- Jets should dump Favre  47- Favre/Pack breakup imminent; Resolution seems unlikely  48- Packers management expects Favre to return for 2008-2009 season  49- Favre's tenure with GRB made him legendary—love of the game, humility, enthusiasm, and generosity—gone but not forgotten; city to honor Favre  50- Individuals/fans pay tribute to Favre, remember him fondly (told from their point of view)  52- Mental fatigue leads to Favre's 1<sup>st</sup> retirement  53- Packers go forward with Rodgers, despite questions of durability/injury proneness  54- Favre return not out of question, expected by some  55- (omitted/combined with another category)  56- Many children benefit from Favre's charity work  57- Favre's absence put into perspective—he'll be missed but we'll survive; new season ahead  58- Mississippi to honor Favre; Favre joins list of famous Mississippians  59- Who got the 1<sup>st</sup> Favre retirement scoop first  60- Packers must act SOON to diffuse explosive situation with Favre  61- Favre's "everyman" quality/relatability with fans  62- Fans mourn Favre's first retirement  63- Even celebrities star struck by Favre  64- Fate &amp; Favre- how his football career began  65- Favre certain Hall of Famer  66- Favre's off field struggles  67- Rodgers and players speak about Favre situation  68- Favre competitive in golf  69- Favre denies return  70- Packers owe it to Favre and will do better with him as QB—let him come back!  71- Packers are crazy for not wanting Favre; other suitors lining up.  72- Favre returns to Green Bay; QB competition likely  73- Favre/McCarthy conversation drags on, no new news yet on Favre/Packers  74- Business as usual in GRB despite Favre drama  75- Favre is a Jet; Favre excited to get started  76- Favre pushes Pennington from Jets  77- Both Packers and Jets have unfulfilling seasons, after all the drama that surrounded them  78- McCarthy and Thompson stand by their decision to trade Favre, after the 2008 season ends; feel they made the right decision  79- Packers owe Jets draft pick for Favre's one season played</p>
Sources	<p>1- Favre  2- Packers players  3- Packers Management  4- Favre family &amp; friends  5- NFL coaches &amp; players  6- NFL retirees &amp; friends, family, or coaches/teammates  7- Sports stars from other disciplines  8- NFL management/spokespeople  9- Packer fans  10- Green Bay residents  11- Jets players/coaches/management  12- Jets fans  13- Favre agent, Bus Cook  14- Media (ESPN spokesperson, ex)  15- Marketing/salespeople  16- Aaron Rodgers  17- Government officials  18- People involved with charities/his causes  19- Celebrities  20- High school/college coaches and recruiters &amp; players  21- Hall of Fame spokespeople  22- Historians/academics  23- Clergy  24- Packers shareholders</p>

\*Numbers were simply used for ease of coding throughout analysis; any numbers missing in the sequence indicate where categories were omitted/combined with another.

## APPENDIX B:

### Breakdown of Frames and Themes by Publication (# of uses by each)

<b>Frames</b>	<i>Green Bay Press Gazette</i>	<i>New York Times</i>	<i>USA Today</i>
Judgment	35	3	4
Rating Favre/Comparisons	9	2	2
Favre as Reference Point for Others	4	5	4
Moving Forward	37	5	5
He said he said	12	2	0
Celebration/Remembrance of Favre	29	3	3
Favre vs. Rodgers/Comparisons and Competition	19	1	1
Rumored Return	6	8	0
Mass Media Coverage of Favre	15	10	1
Divorce	4	1	3
Remarriage/Brett the Jet	12	8	8
Favre Decision on 2008 Expected Soon	3	0	0
Big adjustments ahead for Favre with Jets	2	1	0
Favre's Durability	5	4	0
GRB vs. NY	2	1	0
Revenue effects from Favre	7	0	0
Jets' Future	1	2	0
Favre's Charitable Side	3	0	0
Favre's Early Career—High School and College	1	0	0
Favre wants reinstatement and/or release	8	0	0
<b>Total # Frames Used</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Themes</b>	<i>Green Bay Press Gazette</i>	<i>New York Times</i>	<i>USA Today</i>
Favre is right and/or Packers are wrong	0	1	1
Favre is wrong and/or Packers are right	3	1	3
Favre's desire to return to GRB difficult for Packers	3	0	0
Favre should stay retired; Packers entice Favre with \$\$ to stay retired	5	0	1
Favre is a positive reference point	3	1	3
Favre is a negative reference point	0	1	0
Rodgers can do it; give him a chance	8	1	1
Packers didn't do enough to keep Favre from retiring/McCarthy & Thompson pressured Favre to retire	2	0	0
Favre just okay, not as great as people think	0	1	0
Telephone survey solicits local opinions on Favre situation	3	0	0
Uncertain future for Favre	13	11	4
No opinion on Favre situation	3	2	1
Mixed feelings on Favre situation/mixed reactions	13	1	1
Favre/Packers breakup a milestone for the organization	3	0	1
Drama follows Favre	10	1	0
Favre accuses Packers of not telling the whole truth	4	0	0
Humble, grateful NFL star	6	2	3
Favre is a great competitor, one of the best	7	1	0
Mention of Favre with retirees, no judgment	4	3	0
Packers/Favre—no one blamed for unfortunate situation	2	1	0
Revenue increases for Jets	1	0	0
Favre has serious marketing and revenue pull	10	1	0
Favre media storm won't overshadow Packer Hall of Fame induction	2	0	1
Favre/Packers stalemate ensues	4	0	0
Time will tell if Favre can be successful in NY, big adjustments ahead for Favre	5	3	2
Favre's play promising	3	0	0
Favre fans/Packer fans frustrated by Favre situation; hero fallen, no resolution in sight	1	0	0
Fitting end to Dolphins/Jets seasons for Chad Pennington	1	0	1
Favre's presence in NY takes attention off of NY Giants	0	2	0
Favre's enthusiasm for the game—he's like a child	1	0	0

Favre unimpressive, old as Jets struggle; penalties don't help	2	5	0
Fans in NY fair-weather	0	1	0
Favre's legacy will stay intact even if he plays for another team	2	0	0
Classic Favre performance/meets expectations of Jets	0	3	0
Buccaneers interested in Favre	2	0	0
Favre is indecisive; make up your mind, Brett!	1	0	1
Injuries spur 2 <sup>nd</sup> retirement	1	1	1
Shareholders seem to be behind Thompson/McCarthy's decisions on Favre	2	0	0
Favre's arm is sore	1	0	0
Weather factors into Favre's success	1	1	0
Jets should dump Favre	0	1	0
Favre/Pack breakup imminent; Resolution seems unlikely	4	0	1
Packers management expects Favre to return for 2008-2009 season	1	0	0
Favre's tenure with GRB made him legendary—love of the game, humility, enthusiasm, and generosity—gone but not forgotten; city to honor Favre	2	0	0
Individuals/fans pay tribute to Favre, remember him fondly (told from their point of view)	9	0	0
Mental fatigue leads to Favre's 1 <sup>st</sup> retirement	6	0	0
Packers go forward with Rodgers, despite questions of durability/injury proneness	6	0	0
Favre return not out of question, expected by some	1	0	0
Many children benefit from Favre's charity work	1	0	0
Favre's absence put into perspective—he'll be missed but we'll survive; new season ahead	4	0	0
Mississippi to honor Favre; Favre joins list of famous Mississippians	1	0	0
Who got the 1 <sup>st</sup> Favre retirement scoop first	1	0	0
Packers must act SOON to diffuse explosive situation with Favre	1	0	0
Favre's "everyman" quality/relatability with fans	1	0	0
Fans mourn Favre's first retirement	2	0	0
Even celebrities star struck by Favre	1	0	0
Fate & Favre- how his football career began	1	0	0
Favre certain Hall of Famer	1	0	0
Favre's off field struggles	2	0	0
Rodgers and players speak about Favre situation	4	0	0
Favre competitive in golf	1	0	0
Favre denies return	1	0	0
Packers owe it to Favre and will do better with him as QB—let him come back!	5	0	0
Packers are crazy for not wanting Favre; other suitors lining up.	3	0	0
Favre returns to Green Bay; QB competition likely	8	0	0
Favre/McCarthy conversation drags on, no new news yet on Favre/Packers	1	0	0
Business as usual in GRB despite Favre drama	1	0	0
Favre is a Jet; Favre excited to get started	6	0	0
Favre pushes Pennington from Jets	1	0	0
Both Packers and Jets have unfulfilling seasons, after all the drama that surrounded them	2	0	0
McCarthy and Thompson stand by their decision to trade Favre, after the 2008 season ends; feel they made the right decision	2	0	0
Packers owe Jets draft pick for Favre's one season played	1	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>214*</b>	<b>46*</b>	<b>26</b>

\*Total number of themes used outnumbers the total number of stories for these publications because some sample articles used more than one theme.